WINGS AND FETTERS

A STORY FOR GIRLS

FLORENCE M. KINGSLEY

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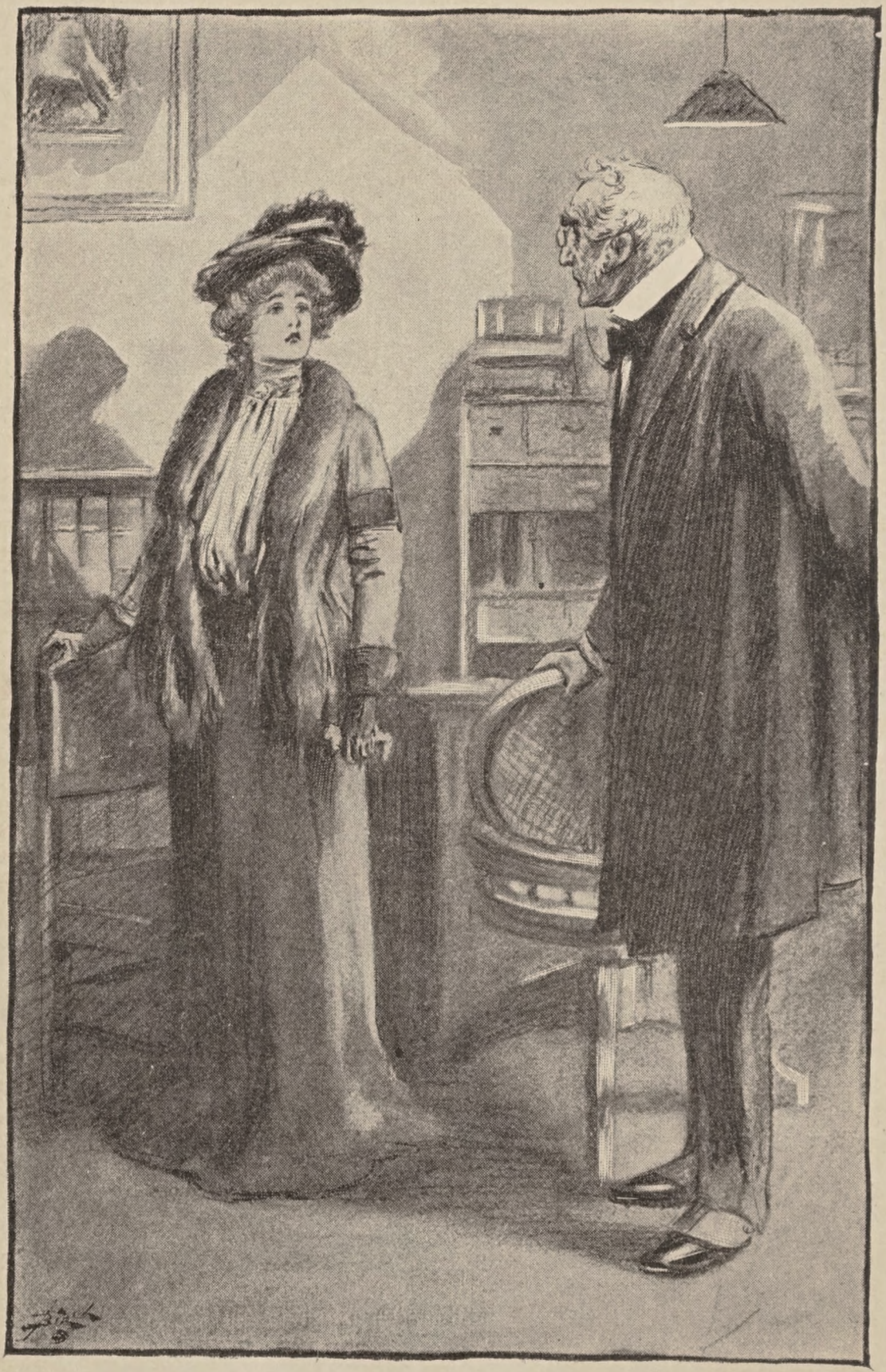
WINGS AND FETTERS



Wings and Fetters—Frontispiece.

"THE GIRL DREW HER SLENDER FIGURE TO ITS FULL HEIGHT."

See p. 18.

Wings and Fetters

A STORY FOR GIRLS

by

Florence Morse Kingsley

Author of "TITUS," "STEPHEN," "PAUL," etc.

with Illustrations by

REGINALD B. BIRCH

HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY

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WINGS AND FETTERS

CHAPTER I

A GIRL'S DECISION

"DO you mean that everything is gone, Mr. Scudder?" The voice that asked the question trembled a little.

The old lawyer, detecting its uncertain cadences, drew his grizzled brows together in a way which he meant to be at once reassuring and intimidating—if such a thing were possible. Mr. Scudder was heartily sorry for the girl who sat opposite him, her bright, anxious eyes fixed upon his face; but he feared that the young person was on the point of bursting into tears. On general principles Mr. Scudder disapproved of tears. They seriously threatened that high

standard of professional decorum which he wished always to maintain in interviews with his clients. A great number of clients—women for the most part, Mr. Scudder recalled—had shed tears from the coign of vantage afforded by that solid leathern chair drawn precisely in front of his own.

He cleared his throat with a dry, rasping sound, indicative of his conclusions. "I have not said, I believe, anything which should lead to so sweeping an inference on your part, Miss—ah—Gordon," he began, referring to the card which lay on the desk before him. "Your own little property, inherited from your mother, is, I am pleased to be able to inform you, intact. This sum will enable you, I should suppose, to pursue your education to the point where you will be self-supporting. A great number of respectable young women turn their education to account nowadays, though personally I can't say that I approve of the custom."

Mr. Scudder paused to shake his head and

purse up his lips before he went on, with a regretful pucker of his frosty brows. "As for your late lamented uncle's estate, we are sorry to find that when all obligations are met there will be practically nothing remaining. During the last years of his life, as you are probably not aware, Mr. Sedgewick made a series of unfortunate investments, as a result of which his widow and child will be almost penniless. It is a most unfortunate state of affairs—most deplorable, in fact—but the situation must be met."

The girl in the leather chair glanced down thoughtfully at the slender hands folded in her lap. She made no haste to reply. The lawyer eyed her with some curiosity, not unmingled with kindly concern. To his immense relief, there was no token of an approaching flood in the clear brown eyes uplifted to meet his own.

"You are pursuing a course of study at Bryn Mawr, I believe you told me," he observed, briskly. "Very fortunate, I 'm sure! Your own property, wisely conserved, will enable you

to complete your education, which, in its turn, should render you independent. Your own future, I may say, is assured."

The girl rose from her chair and drew her slender figure to its full height—it was not a lofty one. The lawyer, who had also risen, looked down upon her with a renewal of his uncomfortable apprehensions. "You will, I trust, break the news to your aunt," he said, hastily. "Or, if you prefer, I will myself communicate with Mrs. Sedgewick. I was on the point of doing so, in fact, but concluded to see you first. These sad affairs are best over with at once—er—at once, you know."

"You wish me, Mr. Scudder, to inform Aunt Margaret and Hazel that all of Uncle Robert's money is gone," said the girl, very quietly. "After I have made this plain to them, I am to take my own money—which is all there is left—and return to college for the purpose of making myself still more independent of them. Is that the course you advise?"

"Why—ah—my dear young lady," said Mr. Scudder, finding himself singularly discomfited under the prolonged scrutiny of the indignant brown eyes. "Really, you know, there seems to be no other course open to you. I offered my suggestions in the kindliest spirit; I—er—must beg to remind you that I can have no possible interest in your affairs. It is scarcely necessary for me to add that we shall do all in our power to arrange matters as comfortably for Mrs. Sedgewick as may be. There will be perhaps a few hundreds, sufficient to support the widow and child in some modest way for the present. There is also a house, unfortunately located, and at present untenanted. This property was long ago so secured that it cannot be touched. It might possibly be sold for a small sum, or—"

The girl had walked swiftly toward the door, but at this she turned.

"I was so angry just now that I did n't wish to talk with you any longer," she said, simply.

"But I would like you to tell me about that house."

"Angry?" exclaimed the lawyer, in amaze. "But not with me assuredly!"

"Yes," said the girl, seriously; "that you should think that I could be such a—such a selfish wretch! Uncle Robert always told me that I would better not talk much when I am angry. I—I always say things, you know—things I wish I had not said afterward."

"I don't think, my dear young lady, that I quite follow you," said the lawyer, with an air of laborious politeness. "I certainly am not conscious of having entertained any derogatory opinion of you while proffering what was, to the best of my knowledge, advice suitable to the circumstances in which a divine providence has seen fit to place you. However, I am not sure that in the present instance it matters much. You—ah—wished to make some inquiries concerning the property of which I spoke. Did you not?"

"Yes," said Miss Gordon, with some eagerness. "If the house is habitable, why should we not go to it? My money will be enough to live on, perhaps, if we are very careful. Don't you think it will?"

The lawyer raised his brows. "Then you contemplate—ah—giving up your own career?" he said, dryly.

The girl compressed her delicate lips. "I must stay with them," she said, somewhat coldly. "I cannot imagine any other career at present."

"The house," said Mr. Scudder, after a short period of reflection—possibly devoted to the ever-perplexing feminine element in a world of law and order—"is located in a retired spot on Staten Island. To be precise, it is situated near the outskirts of a small village known as Richmond Manor. It is an old house, built some seventy odd years ago by the late Robert Sedgewick's grandfather. It was a good house in its day—a fine old place, in fact; it is still known as the Sedgewick Mansion. But it has

remained untenanted for years, and must be sadly out of repair. I should not advise—"

"I think I had best look at it," murmured the girl, as if to herself. "I simply cannot imagine Aunt Margaret and Hazel in a stuffy, fifth-rate boarding-house." She lifted her troubled brown eyes to the old lawyer's face with a look of pathetic appeal. "You said we must leave—home—right away?"

"I stated that it would be impossible for your uncle's widow to continue her present style of living—yes, certainly. As for the old house on Staten Island—well, yes, I think you will do well to inspect it. Mrs. Sedgewick is not, I am told, able to consider business matters at present?"

"Aunt Margaret is perfectly crushed," said the girl; "and Hazel is nothing but a child. But I will manage—I must manage. They have been so good to me!"

The old lawyer pursed up his lip in a non-committal way. He remembered perfectly the

day in which Robert Sedgewick had telephoned to his office that he must start at once for Arizona for the purpose of bringing home his sister's orphaned child, and that therefore he could not be present at an important meeting of the N. Y. B. and J. C. Consolidated Traction Company. Mr. Scudder had ventured to hint to his client that his absence on this particular occasion might imperil certain interests, which were even then known to be trembling in the balance. Could not Mr. Sedgewick wait a few days; or, better, could he not send someone else to fetch the child?

Mr. Sedgewick had replied decidedly that he not only could not but would not entrust the matter to another. He had started for the West that very day, and had returned two weeks later with a tiny, brown-eyed girl, who practically represented (Mr. Scudder told himself) the fortune of his late client, since in his absence the N. Y. B. and J. C. Consolidated Traction Company had met and passed measures which led eventually

to the present crisis in the Sedgewick family affairs.

Mr. Scudder wondered a little if the girl knew anything of all this. His thoughts tinged his next remark: "Your late lamented uncle was certainly less charitable to himself than to other people," he said, caustically. "Charity begins at home, I have always been told."

"Yes, and ends there with most people," thought the girl, with a flash of indignant feeling. "Uncle Robert was the dearest and best man that ever lived," she said, unsteadily. "And I—but, oh, I can't talk about it!" She broke off suddenly, and Mr. Scudder began fussily to open and shut the drawers in his desk.

He found what he wanted presently, and began a hasty explanation of certain matters connected with the house on Staten Island. In conclusion, he presented the girl with his card, upon which he had scrawled a few words introducing her to the local agent. "I think you

will find the old place impossible," he said, shaking his head—"everything gone to ruin and decay. You 'll be glad to take my advice yet; I think I must see your aunt and lay the matter plainly before her."

"No, you must not do that—you shall not!" said the girl, earnestly. "I shall stay with Aunt Margaret and take care of her; I want her to have every cent of my money, and I don't want her to know. Promise me that you will not say anything to her—about the money, I mean, and going back to college. I would n't go back for worlds!"

And yet, as she hurried homeward under the shelter of the darkening twilight skies, this very positive young woman shed some of the very bitterest tears her brown eyes had ever known. "But I would n't go back," she repeated to herself. "I don't want to go back! I could n't be so heartless and ungrateful."

It was quite dark when she ran up the flight of broad stone steps leading to a handsome house,

in whose windows lights were beginning to shine cheerfully. The elderly manservant who opened the door eyed the young lady anxiously as she stepped past him. "I am late, Patrick," she said, with forced cheerfulness. "Has any one been here?"

"No one but the doctor, miss," replied the man, respectfully. "He went an hour ago."

The swift step was already half-way up the stair. A tap at a closed door and the girl was admitted to a dimly-lighted room by a little figure, which seemed to start up from among the shadows. "Oh, Love, is that you? I thought you were never coming!"

"I have been a long time," said the girl, reaching to turn a flood of light upon the scene. "Why are n't you with mother, Hazel?"

"I think she 's asleep," said the child, nodding wisely toward the shadowy room beyond. "I 've been thinking a long time, sitting over in that corner. I was thinking what if daddy should open the door and come in, his eyes all

smiley and bright—you remember, Love? He would have a big bunch of violets for mother; he used to bring them just such evenings as this. And he would say: 'Hello, little woman, what sort of a study are you in to-night—pink, blue, green, brown or yellow?' Because once I told him that I thought that expression, 'She fell into a *brown* study,' was perfectly ridiculous. It is in so many story books—that *brown study;* don't you remember, Love? So when daddy used to see me quiet, as if I was thinking hard about something, he would ask me what color of a study I was in. Sometimes I told him 'pink,' if I was thinking about the fun I had been having in school in the morning; or 'blue,' if I did n't have my tables properly learned, and Miss Porter kept me after lessons; and once it was truly 'green,' because I was envious of Sadie Swan's coral necklace—it really was ever so much prettier than mine. But to-night I should have said '*brown*'—just plain, dull, dark, horrid brown; and I don't believe I shall ever have

any other color of a study in my whole life. Do you think I shall, Lovina Gordon?"

Miss Gordon smiled a little at sound of her old-fashioned name. But her eyes were very sweet and pleasant as she answered the little girl's question: "Yes, indeed, Hazel dear, I am sure you will have ever so many beautifully colored studies; and you must try to have them now. I am sure that is what daddy would like for you."

Hazel shook the dark, curling hair off her forehead as she wound her thin arms about her cousin's waist. "Lovina Gordon," she said, earnestly, "your eyes looked just like daddy's when you said that. I 'm glad I have you left!"

CHAPTER II

A FRIEND IN NEED

ASTIR in the room beyond, followed by a faint request for a light, startled both girls. "I 'm afraid I spoke too loud and waked mother," murmured Hazel, regretfully; "I 'm always so—*percipitate!*"

Love Gordon did not even smile at Hazel's latest acquisition to her vocabulary. She hastened to turn up the light, then paused doubtfully beside the bed in which Mrs. Sedgewick lay, propped to a half-reclining position with great pillows. "Did you have your tea, Aunt Margaret?" she asked.

"How can you ask such a question, child?" syllabled Mrs. Sedgewick faintly. "Since Jane left me no one remembers to ask me whether I

care for tea or not. But no matter; it may not be long that I shall care for anything."

Hazel burst into a loud cry of grief. "Don't say that, mother," she begged, burying her small tear-stained face in the coverlid. "I am willing to work my fingers to the bone for you—that 's what Jane used to say—and I am truly willing, if I could remember all the things to do. Besides, you were asleep at four o'clock, mother—dear, *dear* mother."

Mrs. Sedgewick flashed a look of indignant protest at the older girl. "How can you allow the child to make such a scene in my room," she said, rather sharply, "when you know that my nerves are all in a quiver at the slightest sound?"

Love laid a soothing hand on Hazel's bowed head, and, stooping, whispered a few words in her ear. The little girl rose obediently. "Good-night, dear mother," she said in a low voice. "I think I will study my lessons now, and go to bed."

Mrs. Sedgewick submitted to the kiss the child offered, then lay back among the pillows with closed eyes.

"Don't you think, Aunt Margaret," ventured the girl, "that you would enjoy your dinner better if Patrick served it in the other room? I will help you put on your dressing-gown."

"I wonder that you can propose such a thing, child!" murmured Mrs. Sedgewick, feebly. "The doctor said this afternoon that I must be kept perfectly quiet—my nerves have had such a terrible shock in the death of your poor uncle. I don't feel now as though I ever cared to move from this room again." She folded her delicate hands, upon which sparkled several fine diamonds, and sighed deeply.

Love Gordon stared anxiously at the pretty, worn face in its setting of dark, loose hair, her heart beating fast with apprehension as the lawyer's ominous words recurred to her mind.

"Doctor Manning strongly advises me to take Hazel and spend the summer months abroad,"

pursued Mrs. Sedgewick with a slight access of animation. "But I told him that I could n't think of starting before June. I shall try and get away then. But it exhausts me to even think of such a thing now."

"But, dear Aunt Margaret," faltered the girl, "it will cost so much to go abroad. Don't you think—"

Mrs. Sedgewick's eyes flashed open. "What an absurd fancy!" she exclaimed. "If one wished to economize, that would be the very thing to do; but why should I economize, pray?"

"Because," said the girl firmly, though her heart beat loud in her ears, "Uncle Robert's money is almost all lost, and we shall have to live on ever so little."

There was a breathless silence in the room for a moment, then Mrs. Sedgewick began to cry feebly: "Why will you say such dreadful things to me?" she moaned. "As if I had not suffered enough already!"

"Don't cry, dear—dear Aunt Margaret," begged Love Gordon, chafing her aunt's slender hands in an agony of tenderness. "I will work and take care of you. Indeed, I will do my best—my very best—to make you happy and comfortable!"

Mrs. Sedgewick drew her hands away with a fretful exclamation. "You are so unnecessarily vigorous in your movements, Love, and your hands—really, one would think you were a boy, they are so hard. Jane's touch was much more sympathetic. Where did you get such an absurd notion about the loss of the money? It quite startled me; but, of course, there is no foundation for such an idle fancy. You should never allow the servants to speak to you about family matters, my dear; your poor uncle indulged some of them till they are ready to take the most unheard-of liberties. I have made up my mind to discharge Patrick and Collins as soon as I am able. I think it would be better for my nerves to see new faces about."

"It was n't Patrick, Aunt Margaret," said Love, in a low, tremulous voice. "It was Mr. Scudder. He sent for me to come to his office this afternoon, and told me. We must leave this house immediately."

"Mr. Scudder must be taking leave of his senses," exclaimed Mrs. Sedgewick, with sharp indignation in her voice. "Ring for Jane to bring my writing things; I must tell him at once what I think of him for daring to give me such a fright!"

Then the poor lady began to cry in earnest, passing from a fit of sobbing into strong hysterics. In the end Collins and the two housemaids and even Patrick were called to Miss Gordan's assistance. The doctor was hastily sent for, and the house presented a scene of the liveliest confusion till late in the eveniug, when, as Mrs. Sedgewick had sufficiently recovered herself to partake of a delicate little supper, the girl retired to her own room, heartsick and weary.

The strong, kindly eyes of the pictured face on the wall seemed to be watching her sympathetically as she sank into the easy-chair before her fireless grate. "Oh, Uncle Rob," she sighed, "I will do my best! But I do feel so hopelessly young and insufficient!"

She looked undeniably youthful as she gazed longingly through her tears at the beloved face of the only father she could remember. But there was no hint of weakness about the girlish face; the limpid brown eyes set beneath wide, level brows, the delicate curves of mouth, cheek and chin betokening strength as well as beauty.

A tap at the door roused the girl from a painful reverie in which she pictured the fastidious invalid below stairs as shrinking back horror-stricken at sight of the ruinous old house on Staten Island. "Is that you, Patrick?" she asked, with a start of relief as the wrinkled face of the butler was protruded cautiously into the room.

"Yes, Miss Love," said the old man; "I want you to come down to the dining-room and get a mouthful of supper. Dinner spoiled whilst we were all busy with the madam."

"I don't believe I should have thought of it, Patrick, but I am very hungry," said the girl, rising. "Thank you, I will come down at once."

The big dining-room, with its dark carved oak, its pieces of antique silver, its glowing pictures, its polished coppers and brasses blent into an interior of exceeding richness, which glowed flower-like in the radiance of fire and candlelight. The room looked to-night just as Love remembered to have seen it in the old days which already seemed so sadly far away. She sat down, a slight, solitary figure, at one side of the polished mahogany table. The old butler hovered affectionately near, supplying her wants in his own peculiarly deft, noiseless fashion.

"You 'll be going back soon to the big school, I 've been thinking," he ventured, as the girl

rose from her chair at the conclusion of the meal.

"No, Patrick, I am not going back to college," she said, meeting his anxious eyes with a faint smile. "Aunt Margaret and Hazel will need me at home."

"An' it 's from your own kind heart that you say that!" cried Patrick. "I was telling Collins so this very day. Miss Love 'll never be leaving us, I says; with the madam that weak an' delicate that she can't bear the sound of our voices."

The girl looked sadly into the kind, rugged face of the old butler. She knew him for more than a faithful servant; her uncle had long counted him a faithful friend. "If anything should happen to me, Love," he had once said to her with a flash of prescience, "be sure that you keep Patrick with you; his whole heart is bound up in the family life." The memory of this saying made the words which hovered upon her lips difficult of utterance. But her voice

was clear and steady as she said: "I fear we shall have to leave this house, Patrick, and give up everything here. I tell you this because you and Collins and the rest will have to find new places."

"But, Miss Love," stammered the old man in his painful astonishment, "is it the money? Do you mean that the money is gone?"

The girl bowed her head; it seemed increasingly difficult to speak.

"But where will you be going, miss? An' whatever can you be doing with—with the madam and the child? There 'd be many a snug corner of the world open to yourself, I 'm thinking. You would never be the one to fret if the roof that covered you was plain an' humble. But the madam—"

"I shall not leave them," said the girl. "We must all stay together whatever happens." Then she told him what the lawyer had said. He nodded emphatically when she mentioned the old house on Staten Island.

"I know the place well," he said, meditatively. "Many 's the job of weeding I did in the gardens there when my father was living an' I a young lad, not liking over much to work in the ground. The young master was born in the old house, an' well I remember the day. The family used to move out there as regular as clock-work the first day of May of every year, an' back in town they all were the day after Thanksgiving. It was a fine old place in those days, with the coach-houses and the big barns, the gardens, graperies an' greenhouses. An' there was no end of outbuildings for storing tools, bulbs, tender roots and the like. I remember as though it was yesterday how my father shut me into the tool-house for a whole afternoon once because I threatened to run away to sea after weeding the onion-patch. Onions is nasty things to keep clear of weeds, sure, an' I could never please my father in the doing of it. Yes, it was a fine place!"

Love Gordon had drawn her delicate brows

together and was looking very sober. "If it is that sort of a place, Patrick," she said, "I fear there is no use of going to see it. It would cost too much to live there, and Mr. Scudder told me that the house was sadly out of repair —gone to ruin and decay, he said."

"Don't you believe it, miss," said Patrick, stoutly. "That house was n't run up in a week out of the thin, shoddy stuff they put into thim nowadays. Black oak timbers, they was, that went into it; I 've heard my father tell of the building of the old house many a time. The studding was thicker than your waist, miss, an' the walls are lined solid with brick an' mortar. No, the old Sedgewick mansion was n't made to fall to pieces in a day, miss—no, nor in a life-time! You 'll be going to see it to-morrow, Miss Love, an' it 's Patrick Miles that 's going with you. We 'll see what there is to see, any-how!"

An unreasoning hope took possession of the girl's heart as she made ready to sleep that night.

"I am sure I don't know why it is," she murmured, as she regarded the bright-eyed vision that gazed back at her from the depths of her mirror, "but I feel happier to-night than I have since Uncle Robert died."

Perhaps it was the actual warmth radiating from Patrick's kind soul which penetrated and warmed into comfort her benumbed heart. Perhaps it was a faint radiance shining on her forward way, but she fell asleep smiling, and dreamed of walking in a beautiful garden, where masses of blossoms were springing on every hand, pink and white hyacinths, and daffodils royal yellow, crocus, purple and gold and white, and violets peeping out from coverts of cool, green leaves, all nodding their starry heads in a light so sweet that she sang aloud for very joy of heart. And the song remained in her heart and on her lips as she opened her eyes to the new day, which looked in grey and somber at the window.

The thousand fretting noises of the city streets

greeted her in subdued chorus as she stood for a moment fully dressed looking out. A hand-organ, wheezy and discordant, whined out the half-forgotten melody of "Sweet Violets," its feeble chords drowned in the uninterruped rumble of wheels near and far, and the distant cries of street-venders. The shrill chirping of innumerable sparrows filled the nearer air; a pair of them engaged in a heated quarrel dropped upon the sill almost within reach of her hand. Their strident voices dominated all other sounds as they dealt savage blows right and left with their blunt beaks. Another moment and they plunged with furious haste into the street, carrying on their combat to a finish almost under the hoofs of an advancing horse.

The girl sighed; the radiant garden of her dreams seemed very far away from the grey tints of her present surroundings. Yet the light lingered on her young face, so that Mrs. Sedgewick, sighing dismally in the face of the morning, remarked it. "You look as fresh as a milk-

maid, Love," she said fretfully. "How you and Hazel can sleep and eat and enjoy yourselves as you do through everything is more than I can understand! But some people seem born without any sensibility, and can endure what simply crushes one with delicate nerves and a sensitive disposition."

The hot color that flooded the girl's face actually forced the tears; but she answered very quietly: "Don't you think that when one must endure a trouble, Aunt Margaret, one ought to be as patient as possible, so as not to make it harder for other people?" She was sorry for the words before they were fairly spoken, and she was sorrier yet before Mrs. Sedgewick had done with the rambling, querulous complaints apparently called forth by her words. The poor lady looked worn and fragile in the light that now streamed in brightly through the half-closed blind, and Love's heart smote her as she stepped softly about, performing the humble offices of the sick-room.

"Dear Aunt Margaret," she said gently, "I am very thoughtless, I know; but have patience with me, I will try to improve."

Mrs. Sedgewick glanced at the glowing young face with a mixture of impatience and admiration. "I know you mean to do your best, Love," she said plaintively; "but you simply cannot enter into feelings like mine. Only think how you brought on that terrible nervous attack last night through sheer carelessness—and after all the doctors have said about my keeping quiet!"

Love bit her lip. "I am very sorry that I had to speak of it," she said hastily. "I ought to have waited till this morning, when you were feeling rested."

"Rested!" echoed Mrs. Sedgewick; "I am never rested. I lie awake hour after hour and hear the clock strike. While we are on the subject, I will tell you that I have sent for Mr. Scudder. I mean to have a plain talk with him. I 'm sure I don't know how I shall be

able to endure the sound of his terribly penetrating nasal voice; but I am determined to have matters arranged so that I can rest comfortably till I am able to go abroad. I have made up my mind to take you with me, Love," she added graciously; "you are quite a comfort to me."

The girl stooped to leave a grateful kiss on the white fingers which lay on the coverlid. "Could you spare me awhile to-day, Aunt Margaret?" she asked hestitatingly. "I will leave everything ready, and Suzette will wait just outside the door and bring up your tea at five. It shall not be forgotten again."

Mrs. Sedgewick looked offended. "You know that I don't like Suzette about me," she said; "the girl is so unlike Jane in every movement. Still you must go, I suppose, if you have made up your mind. Your poor uncle always spoiled you completely. Don't go anywhere, though, without one of the maids."

Love smiled rather sadly. "Patrick is going with me," she said.

CHAPTER III

THE HOUSE ON THE ISLAND

HAZEL sat curled into a small, disconsolate bunch in the deep window-seat of the breakfast-room. She looked up from a book as her cousin entered. "I am dreadfully behind in my lessons, Love," she announced with a sigh. "Must I go to school this week?"

The older girl glanced thoughfully at the illumined calendar which hung near. "Is n't it nearly time for a new quarter to commence?" she asked.

"Yes, it begins to-morrow," said Hazel. "I remember because Miss Porter said she wished to see every young lady in her place punct-u-ally

on the morning of the ninth, as she had something important to communicate."

Miss Gordon smiled at the child's quaint assumption of the stately airs of the preceptress. Then her face grew sober as she looked down into the thin little face with its too large eyes upturned to meet her own. "How would you like to stop school for awhile and do your lessons with me?" she asked.

"I should like it above all things!" cried Hazel, springing up and casting her book upon the floor. "What fun it will be to see the other girls hurrying past in the morning! Of course, I shall study like everything for you," she added with a comical grimace; "you 'll be such a strict governess, Lovina Gordon!"

"Indeed I shall, as you shall see," said her cousin laughing. "But come, we must make haste with our breakfast; we are going somewhere this morning, you and I and Patrick."

"Where are we going?" demanded the child. "Is it something pleasant—a surprise? I

have n't had any nice surprise for an age. Nothing but dreadful ones."

"Some of it will be pleasant," said Love brightly, as she smiled into the quivering little face. "A ferry-boat ride to Staten Island will be cheerful this breezy day; don't you think it will?"

"But why should you and I and Patrick go to Staten Island?" asked Hazel. "Does mother know?"

"She knows we are going out—yes," said Love. "I would n't talk much in mother's room this morning, Hazel," she added gravely; "you know she was very nervous last night. We must be careful not to disturb her again."

"I think *I* could be nervous," said Hazel meditatively. "Sometimes, do you know, I feel just like screaming as loud as I can. Suppose I should do it some day in school—or in church! Then I would probably laugh to think how surprised all the people would be, and after that I should cry to think I had laughed. Then I should have hysterics, and maybe faint away."

"I don't think you ought to talk that way, Hazel," said her cousin gravely, though with a slight twinkle in her eyes. "You know you would never do anything so foolish."

"No, I would n't," said the child emphatically. "Nerves are queer," she added after a pause; "they are like 'things that get in the saddle and ride mankind.'"

"Where in the world—" began Miss Gordon wonderingly.

"That 's a quotation, Lovina Gordon; if you 're going to be a governess and teach *me*, you 'll have to know quotations."

"I think I shall have to know a number of things," murmured the Bryn Mawr student, wrinkling her forehead.

It was a breezy March morning, and the beautiful bay was tossed into innumerable white-crested, amber-colored waves, while against the more distant shores, and under the rapidly drifting cloud-shadows and beneath the hulls of moving vessels, were belts and patches of ame-

thyst dashed with green. The two girls stood on the forward deck of the great, clumsy ferry-boat, as she nosed her way cautiously among the swarming tugs and steamers at South Ferry.

"Just see the new bridge, Love," cried Hazel; "it looks almost like the old one, only more cobweb-like."

"That is because the cables are new and shining," said the girl. "See, dear, there is a big steamship just coming in."

They were well out from the shore as they passed slowly by the big ocean greyhound, as Hazel sentimentally called it, coming in from her long race between the continents. "See, it is all covered with foam," she said, "like a horse that has been driven too hard.—Yes," added the little girl wisely, "I know well enough what all that white stuff on the smoke-stacks really is: it is the salt from the big waves which has dried on. Do you know, Lovina Gordon, you sometimes seem a little dull to me? I was

only carrying out the figure. Did n't you learn to carry out the figure at college?"

Love admitted meekly that she had heard of the exercise, but begged to remind her young pupil that she had herself taken liberties with the figure. "You should have said, 'like a dog that has been running too fast,' if you are going to call the ship a greyhound."

Hazel smiled approvingly. "I am glad you noticed that," she said. "I like to have confidence in my teachers. I want them to know ever and ever so much more than I do. I should like never to ask them a single question that they could not answer right away."

"I think we should all like a teacher of that sort," said Love thoughtfully; "but the next best thing is to have one honest enough to say, 'I don't know.' Perfectly honest people are even rarer than learned ones," she added sententiously.

"That may be true," observed Hazel incisively; "but I think you said it just like a

sophomore. Just think, Love, if you don't go back to college, you will have to stay a sophomore *forever* and *ever!*"

Love laughed aloud, a sound as fresh and cheerful as the rush of the water under the broad forefoot of the big craft. "What a dreadful prospect!" she cried, and turned to meet a pair of keen grey eyes, which a young man sitting near them lifted from the paper he was reading. The warm color flooded the girl's face. "I think we had best go around to the other side," she said hastily. "Patrick is there, and I want to see that funny little lighthouse."

"Did you think that man heard what I said," whispered Hazel—"about being a sophomore forever and ever."

"I don't know; but I 'm afraid we both forgot that we were not alone."

"That is one trouble about being poor," said Hazel meditatively. "Poor people always go about in big droves and swarms—like the people

in the cabin there. I should hate to be poor; should n't you?"

"I am poor," said Love. Her face fell as she said it.

Hazel began stoutly to combat this statement; but in the bustle which presently ensued at the terminus the question was dropped.

Patrick seemed to know just where to go, and the two girls soon found themselves seated in a train running smoothly along the arm of the sea which cuts off from the skirt of the continent that small fragment known as Staten Island. A forest of chimneys, presided over by one giant shaft towering more than three hundred feet into the air, filled the further shore, along which were moored hundreds of dingy vessels.

"Thim yonder is the oil refineries and the varnish works," Patrick informed them. "An' nasty things they be, choking the air on this side when the wind 's in the north," he added, eyeing the tall chimney severely. "They do say as how that big fellow there 'll carry off all

the smells up into heaven; but thim that lives there won't be thanking thim if it does." He rose from his seat as he concluded this dictum, and peered out at an approaching station. "Here we are, young ladies, an' it 's right well I remember the place!"

"Where are we going?" demanded Hazel, brimming over with unappeased curiosity, as they seated themselves in the trolley-car. Love opened her lips to reply, but blushed instead. She had caught another discomfiting glance from the keen grey eyes which had startled her on board the ferry. Their owner immediately busied himself with a book, which he read persistently despite the jolting of the car.

The streets through which they were passing were mean and ugly; though now and then one had a glimpse of a fine old mansion standing aloof amid its trees and shrubbery, as if trying to hide from its distasteful neighbors.

"I don't like Staten Island at all," announced Hazel conclusively. "It is very ugly indeed!"

"Just wait a bit, Miss Hazel," said Patrick, "till you see where we're going; you won't think it's so ugly, maybe."

"If I have asked once, I have asked one—two—yes, at least five times, where we are going," said the child severely. "Do you know, Patrick?"

"We are going to see the master's old home, miss," said the man softly.

Hazel clasped her hands in an ecstasy. "Oh," she said, "I am so glad! Daddy used to tell me stories often and often about when he was a little boy, and of the splendid fun he had over here. Once he asked mother to come and stay a summer; but she said she could n't abide Staten Island. It was so common nowadays, filled up with poor people who could n't afford to live in town, and swarming with mosquitoes."

Patrick looked very dignified, and the blank, unhearing expression which he assumed at great dinner-parties crept over his face. He made no reply.

"It certainly looks as if dreadfully poor peo-

ple lived around here," continued Hazel, glancing out of the car window. "Such dirty little houses, and the streets—ugh!" This last as a whirl of dust, driven before the capricious March wind, entered the open door and distributed itself impartially among the passengers. The car had stopped to admit a big German woman, armed with a bigger basket, and exhaling an odor of beer and sauer-kraut, which caused the fastidious little lady to draw away with frowning brows.

But presently the big woman with the big basket got off before the door of a brewery, and then the poor little houses became fewer. After a while they disappeared altogether, and were succeeded by stretches of rolling meadow-lands and patches of fine woods. Here and there a massive stone gate-way introduced the eye to a winding drive, which disappeared amid masses of trees and shrubs. Peaked roofs and tall chimneys lifted themselves haughtily in isolated spots.

"Now, miss," said Patrick—the dinner-party

expression quite banished from his wrinkled face—"this looks more like old Staten Island. They 've quite spoiled the shores on the north side—an' more 's the pity; what with the factories an' the breweries an' all the folks that gathers 'round such places! Sure an' I remember the day when the finest of the fine folks in town yonder had to have their summer houses out here. It was the Quarantine Islands that spoiled it all. The ladies would have it that yellow fever an' cholera an' the like 'ud blow acrost."

"Quarantine Islands!" repeated Hazel. "That's where they keep the sick people that come in on the ships. I know because daddy told me all about it once when we went to Sandy Hook to see the yacht-races. They've always been there, Patrick."

"No, miss, they was n't always there. There was just a couple of sand-bars that you could see at low tide. They built 'em up with stone an' what-not till they 're solid ground enough

now. But there 's no danger of fever blowing acrost all the salt water, and never was. It spoilt Staten Island, though, for lots of the rich people. They shut up their fine houses, an' went off to Long Branch an' Newport an' Narragansett."

The old man signalled the conductor to stop as he spoke the last words, and all three stood presently in considerable perplexity at the head of a new, raw-looking street that stretched away through the fields, dotted here and there with small houses of ornate build.

Not far away was a stone gateway partly fallen into ruin, the deep-cut trail of wheels showing that some one had lately passed that way. Patrick looked thoughtfully about him. "This is the old place, sure," he said, his face clouding with dismay. "I reckon we 'd best follow the trail; it 'll fetch us to the house—unless they 've made way with it, as they have with the gate there. This was the old carriage

road, miss, an' a fine one it was, firm an' hard, though you would n't guess it."

The driveway, half effaced with rank-growing grasses and the tangled web of the creeping blackberry, wound among groups of great chestnuts and hickories, presently bringing into view a little eminence crowned with grey buildings. Patrick stopped short and stared for a moment without speaking, then he hurried forward so fast that the girls could hardly keep pace with him. It was a big, rambling, many-windowed structure of no particular style; piazzas at front and sides, and a plenitude of gables and bow-windows, curiously topped with a battlemented cornice, which had fallen here and there into ruin. On either side, as if keeping guard over the decaying fortunes of the old roof-tree, stood a pair of giant cedars, one of which had lost its crown in some wintry storm, for it lay across their path as the little party came silently up to the long-closed front door. The aspect of the forsaken house was sad and melancholy; it seemed

to be holding a plaintive dialogue with the ancient cedars which whispered mysteriously as the wind rushed by, slamming some loosened and creaking blind in its wild passage.

Hazel shivered a little and thrust her cold, little hand into Love's warm one. "Somehow it makes me want to cry," she whispered. "It looks like an old, old person who has been left alone so long that he has forgotten how to smile."

"An empty house is never very cheerful to look at, dear," said Love, speaking with a confidence which she did not feel. She glanced up anxiously as she spoke. The sky was darkening with one of the swift-approaching storms of early spring. Patrick now emerged from behind the house, looking as gloomy as the March heavens, his hands clasped behind his back.

"I think it is going to rain, Patrick," said the young lady. "I wish we had gone to the agent for the keys at once, then we could go in till it clears. As it is, perhaps we had best

seek shelter in one of the houses over there." She glanced dubiously as she spoke at a cottage which seemed to flaunt its fantastic, impertinently new roof in the face of the pathetic old mansion.

"No trouble about our getting in, miss," said Patrick, with strong indignation in his voice. "Anybody could get in, for that matter. I found one of the long windows in the dining-room unlocked. If you 'll just step 'round this way, I 'll show you, miss. A fine agent they 've put in charge, sure! An' a shame to thim, the way they 've spoiled the ol' place!"

The two girls stepped into the long, French window which Patrick had found unlatched just as a gust of mingled wind and rain struck the house. The old man busied himself in making the window fast against the rain which was now pouring in a furious flood. "A shame to thim," he was grumbling to himself. "An' the shrubbery all broken down, an' the coach-house windows smashed, an' the fruit trees grown over

with black knot, an' the garden a wilderness, an' half the glass in the greenhouses gone. A shame to thim, I says, whoever they be as has done it!"

He turned to glance at his young mistresses, who were examining the room with a good deal of curiosity.

CHAPTER IV

PATRICK HAS AN IDEA.

IN the gray light which struggled in through the dusty windows, it was easy to see that this had once been a very handsome and cheerful room; but its aspect was now gloomy and sad, like the exterior of the old house. Hazel still kept fast hold of Love's hand as the two girls stepped about—softly, as if half afraid of disturbing the memories which seemed to cluster thick about the echoing walls. Beneath the mantle, built of some warm-toned Italian marble, gaped a fireplace, its fender and fire-dogs green with mold. The walls, ceilings and floor were of wood, dark and rich in tone beneath the disfiguring dust and cobwebs. Behind the gaping doors of some curious old sunken

cupboards lurked a piece or two of ancient blue china, cracked and broken, yet seeming with its lovely color to lend the brave cheer of days gone by to the lonely room.

Next to the dining-room was a small morning-room opening onto a veranda, which in its turn gave upon what had once been a wide expanse of lawn with shrubbery and flower borders. Among the heaps of decaying leaves and fallen stems Love could see clusters of the adventurous spear-points of daffodils and tulips. A straggling hedge of box flanked by low-growing evergreens half hid the weedy wilderness of the garden.

"It must have been pleasant here once," half whispered Hazel; "but is n't it too shivery and dreadful now? It ought to be torn down and decently buried. I wish it would stop raining, so that we could go home."

"Let us see the other rooms," said Love, turning away from the window with a sinking heart.

"Will you tell me, Lovina Gordon, what ever made you think of coming to see this melancholy ruin?" demanded Hazel, a few minutes later, as they completed their tour of the lower story. There were two great rooms with fireplaces on either side of the wide, echoing hall—"parlors," Patrick called them—a library and kitchens, the latter a degree more dismal and forlorn than the rest, with mouldering heaps of ashes in the rust-eaten range, and a litter of nondescript rubbish choking the sinks and pantries, as if the last tenants had yielded to a fit of despair in their flitting and abandoned a part of their outworn household goods to decay with the ruinous house.

"We could never live here in the world!" said Miss Gordon, ignoring the little girl's question. "The place is plainly 'impossible,' just as Mr. Scudder said."

"Live here!" echoed Hazel. "Of course we could n't live here. What ever put such a fancy

into your mind? Mother simply would n't hear of it!"

"Hazel," said Love desperately, "you must know some time, and so I will tell you now: almost every bit of Uncle Robert's money is gone—swallowed up somehow, I don't understand exactly; but it must be true, for Mr. Scudder said so, and he is perfectly reliable. Uncle always trusted him. We must go somewhere away from the house in Seventy-fifth Street. This place is left, and I thought, I hoped—"

Something like a sob choked the girl's voice for an instant; but she went on bravely, answering the frightened question in Hazel's great dark eyes. "We shall get along some way, dear. God will help us; only we must not be frightened and lose our nerve, whatever we do; for then we cannot think clearly about what is best."

"Do you mean that we are dreadfully poor,"

faltered the child, "and that we must go around the rest of our lives in droves and swarms?"

Love smiled in spite of herself. "Not in very large droves or swarms yet awhile, Hazel, dear," she said gently. "Just mother and you and I." Her voice still trembled a little. "But we must keep a strong heart and not be afraid. That is worst of all—the being afraid. I am going to give you a quotation, Hazel, that I want you to remember; for it is true, and it has been such a comfort to me: 'God 's in his heaven; all 's well with the world!"

Patrick's deliberate step was heard echoing down the stairs, and the girls furtively wiped away two or three tears that would come as they turned to meet him. "How is it above, Patrick?" asked Miss Gordon anxiously.

"Not so bad, nor not so good, either," answered the old butler cautiously. "I 'll have a word with thim that 's had charge here, or my name 's not Patrick Miles! They 've left the water in the pipes, for one thing, an' it 's froze

solid. The tank in the attic has been leaking for another, an' there 's icicles a foot long down the walls. Carelessness—carelessness, that 's what 's been abroad here; an' a lot of ne'er-do-wells a-living in a house that 's been good enough for Queen Victory in its day. But come up—come up an' see for yourselves!"

The storm was clearing as suddenly as it had gathered, and a burst of sunlight shone through the broad, low windows of the spacious chamber at the head of the winding stair. Both girls uttered an exclamation of pleasure at sight of this room; it showed signs of cheerful, human occupancy in the perenially fresh blue and white paper with which its walls were hung, while the open fireplace spoke mutely of comfort and cheer in chill days of autumn and winter.

"This room would do beautifully for mother," said Hazel—"if she would come," she added dubiously. "And, oh, Love, I have always wanted to live in the country! Do see that big orchard out there, and the barns—and is n't

that a greenhouse? I think it will be just splendid!"

Love drew her delicate brows together. "I don't see how—" she began.

But Patrick interrupted her, albeit with an air of the profoundest respect. "You 'll be thinking about the lawns an' the gardens, Miss Love," he said. "You 'll remember how I was telling you that I learnt the gardener's business from my father on this very place; I have n't lost what was put into me then—some of it with a good birch rod, as was right an' proper. With a strong young fellow to give me a lift with the ploughing and clearing up, I 'll soon have the old place looking like itself, please God!"

"But, Patrick," said the girl in a low voice, "we shall have so little—so very little to live on; I—we could not pay you. I don't know what we shall do, but we must not go into debt."

"Well, Miss Love, I hope you won't be offended when I tell you that I 've taken the liberty of talking matters over with Eliza Col-

lins," said the old man with dignity. "You may be sure, miss, that whatever I say to *her* 'ull go no further in the servant's hall; Collins is as close-mouthed as I could wish. You may be surprised to hear it, miss, but Eliza an' me have kep' company for a matter of fifteen years or more. We 've had no call to marry up to now, but as we 've both laid by a goodish bit of money we 've decided to join company."

"I 'm sure I wish you joy, Patrick," said the young lady, repressing her wonder at this announcement. "Collins is a good woman, and will make you a pleasant home."

"Eliza Collins is all of that, an' more," said Patrick warmly. Then he shifted from one foot to the other as if undecided how to proceed. "You know as how me an' Eliza have always made it our home with the Sedgewick family," he began at last, "ever since we was foolish young things with no more sense 'an goslins. An' I for one ain't prepared at my time of life to take up with new friends—if you 'll excuse

the word, miss, from the likes of Patrick Miles Eliza Collins is of my mind exactly, an' I 'll say here an' now that I would n't think of marrying her if she was n't. But she 's of my mind an' opinion to a dot, an' so the two of us 'ud like to make our home with you, Miss Love, in this 'ere house—which is big enough for us all, thank God! Collins 'll handle the cooking as heretofore, an' she 'll easy do the rest that 's wanting inside, for she 's strong an' hearty. I 'll manage the outside. An' to make things fair an' business-like—as I know you 'll like, Miss Love—I 'll work the land—there 's about ten acres of it—on shares. My half 'll pay Collins an' me, an' pay us han'some; your half 'll go far to keep the house going."

Patrick paused for breath, and wiped his forehead with a sigh.

Love's eyes filled with tears. She drew a deep breath. "Oh, Patrick," she cried, "how good you are—you and Collins both, to have thought of all this! But will it be right—for

you to do it, I mean? Ought we to accept such a sacrifice; for I know it will be much harder than either of you have been used to?"

"I give you my word, Miss Love, that I 'm tired of city life," said the old man earnestly. "I 've been just hungering to get to work on the land. Strange how a man comes to love what he once hated. An' as for Collins—won't she have me?"

Miss Gordon laughed outright. "She 'll have a treasure," she cried impulsively. "But how are we going to live in this house, Patrick? It is n't fit for Aunt Margaret to step into."

"It 's sound and solid and weather-tight, miss; I 've found that out," said Patrick. "I 've been all over the place, an' there ain't a leak anywhere. It only wants a deal of cleaning an' a paint-pot an' a paper-hanger. Never fear, you won't know the place once it 's clean. It won't cost so much, either; I know a bit about such work."

Altogether it was a cheerful and hopeful little

party that reached the city late in the afternoon. Hazel's dark eyes shone bright as stars as she darted upstairs to her mother's room, pausing at the threshold with a sudden expressive clouding over of her joyous face. The dreaded "brown study" seemed always ready to envelope one like a fog in this luxurious chamber. To the child's surprise she beheld her mother fully dressed, sitting by the fire.

"Oh, mother, dear," she breathed softly, "how good it seems to see you up once more! Are you better, dearest?"

Mrs. Sedgewick's pallid face flushed painfully. She seemed on the verge of tears. "Where is Love?" she asked.

"Here, Aunt Margaret," said the young girl, who had just entered. Mrs. Sedgewick put an arm about each of the girls, and buried her face on Hazel's shoulder. "My poor, poor dears!" she said faintly. "What will become of us?"

Love perceived that something unusual had happened. That this something had been a visit

from the lawyer, Mr. Scudder, she had learned from Suzette on entering the house. "Dear Aunt Margaret," she said gently, "we have much to be thankful for." Then in as few words as possible she related their adventures of the morning, passing lightly over the sad condition of the old house, and dwelling much on its spacious, airy rooms, its wide verandas and sunny lawns.

Mrs. Sedgewick listened attentively. Then she shook her head. "It would never do in the world," she said plaintively. "We should need an army of servants to keep the place in proper order. Mr. Scudder advises me to put Hazel into some inexpensive boarding-school. There are such places, I suppose. You, Love, must go back to college, and I—well, it does n't matter much what becomes of me. I can go for a while to your great-aunt Sedgewick in Boston. I had a letter from her to-day."

Hazel uttered a little moan of indignant pro-

test. "We just *must* keep together—we three!" she said.

And Love echoed her words with an anxious pucker of her white forehead. "Dear Aunt Margaret," she added, after a few moments of silent reflection, "suppose we try—just try the old Staten Island place for the summer. Patrick and Collins will go with us; and we shall arrange everything comfortably for you before you go over. If we don't like or can't manage the place, it will be easy to make other plans for the winter. Hazel needs a little vacation, I think, and I will keep my acquirements brushed up by teaching her mornings after we are once settled."

Mrs. Sedgewick moved in her chair uneasily. "I don't see how we could keep Patrick and Collins," she said at last. "They are the most expensive servants we have. Collins could command almost any situation as cook. That vulgar, pushing Mrs. Van Spader across the street actually had the impertinence to send her maid

to-day to ask me if I would allow Collins to come and talk with her. Our affairs must be in everybody's mouth!" And with this the poor lady betrayed signs of a nervous attack, which sent Hazel flying for the various smelling-salts, sedatives and what-not prescribed by Mrs. Sedgewick's fashionable physician.

Love Gordon sat quite still in her place, keeping fast hold of the slender white hand, which had fastened upon hers with a sort of desperation. In a calm, cheerful way she explained Patrick's new hopes and plans, which someway sounded surprisingly feasible as set forth by the young mistress of affairs. "There will certainly be no harm in going there for a time," she concluded. "There is a great deal of fruit on the place, which must be worth something. Then we shall have the summer to look about us and decide what is best."

"I hope we shall stay there forever and a day!" cried Hazel. "Such chestnut trees! Such a pond for skating! Such fun altogether!"

Love shot a warning glance at her cousin, which seemed after all unnecessary. Mrs. Sedgewick's pale face seemed to reflect something of the glow in the childish dark eyes so near her own, as she said with surprising composure: "Well, it will be a comfort to send word to that Van Spader woman that I shall retain Collins in my own employ. It was really quite clever in Patrick to have thought of it. I dare say he will make a very good thing out of the place, and no one need know of the arrangement but ourselves." After a pause she added: "I think, on the whole, it is the best thing we can do. It will look more dignified even than to go abroad."

A smile and a frown mingled curiously in Love Gordon's brown eyes as she stooped over the frail figure in the arm-chair and dropped a kiss on the white, unwrinkled forehead.

CHAPTER V

THE PUMPKIN COACH

"EVERYTHING seems to be coming out as if there was a fairy godmother behind the scenes," exclaimed Hazel in her characteristic fashion one day a few weeks later. "I do believe you have a fairy godmother, Lovina Gordon; you are just the sort of a disguised princess that always has a pumpkin coach and a rat coachman waiting to take you wherever you want to go."

Love shrugged her slim shoulders with a little laugh. "You would have thought me a veritable Cinderella to-day, if you could have seen me with my head tied up in a silk handkerchief hanging curtains, dusting furniture and

making myself generally useful if not ornamental," she said.

"To begin with," proceeded Hazel, seating herself cross-legged like a Turk on the floor of their dismantled chamber, "there was that dear, delightful Mrs. de Forrest, who insisted upon carrying mother away to Lakewood, where she is safely out of all the horrid moving, selling and breaking up, which is too much like the rack and torture-chamber for one with nerves. I 'm glad I have n't any nerves, Lovina; I never mean to grow any!"

"Then there was the equally dear and delightful Mr. Livingstone-Fish, who bought all of Uncle Robert's collections for ever and ever so much more than Mr. Scudder thought they would bring," added Love.

"Yes, indeed," assented Hazel. "And, speaking of Mr. Scudder, who would have dreamed that he would suddenly turn into a regular, gushing well of kindness! He 's been really too good to be natural outside a story-book; what

with bidding in—if that is what you call it—mother's pet furniture and the rugs, and making everything so comfortable and easy, I don't see where any particular hardship is coming in, do you?"

Love's brown eyes were misty as she gazed at her cousin's sparkling face. "Everybody has been so kind that it makes me cry for pure joy to think of it," she said at length. "All of our mountains seem to be sinking away into mole-hills."

"It must be the fairy godmother's magic wand," observed Hazel, reflectively. "But there 's no prince in the play yet; I 'm looking for him to turn up most any day now." She burst into a fit of elfin laughter, which subsided before the sweet, serious look in the older girl's face.

"The old fairy story is only a fanciful way of setting forth an older truth," Miss Gordon was saying dreamily. "When the wandering princess tries to forget herself and what she wants to

do that she may help someone else, then the bird in the bush, the fish in the sea, or the people she meets along the way all help. It is just beautiful to have found that out for certain, Hazel!"

"Did *you* want to do something else, Lovina Gordon?" demanded Hazel, shaking the thick, curling locks out of her eyes. "Yes, I know you did! You wanted to go back to college!"

Love Gordon's sensitive face flushed with vexation. Then she laughed. "If I did, Hazel, it was so long ago that I 've forgotten it," she said lightly. "I was only thinking about the fairy stories. It is really the most interesting study—myths and ethics, I mean. To see how they go hand in hand all the way down ancient history, like the prince and princess of the story. It almost seems as if only children and child-like people could see the real, true meaning which lies just under the surface of things."

"Spoken like a sophomore again!" quoth Hazel mockingly, "or like a school-ma'am—

which is exactly the same thing. How tiresomely well you do remember your literature lectures, Lovina. The prince will never find you out if you don't forget them soon!"

Love Gordon looked seriously annoyed. "I do hope, Hazel," she said with dignity, "that you are not going to grow into one of those sharp-tongued, sarcastic girls who make everything into a joke. It is so hard to say anything to such people. Virginia McCloud was just such a girl; to talk with her was like trying to converse with a bunch of fireworks. She was always going off with unexpected little bangs and fizzes and sparkles. It was simply tiresome after awhile."

Hazel looked very sober. "If I should grow tiresome to you, Love," she said with a little quiver in her voice, "I should—well, I should n't want to—"

"Come here, you darling!" commanded Love, and hugged the little girl close to her heart. "I 'm tired and stupid to-night after my Cin-

derella experiences. That 's why I was cross; for it is certainly the stupidest thing in the world to be cross. There now, forgive me, dear, and we 'll go to bed and to sleep. At exactly eight-thirty o'clock to-morrow morning we set sail for our island home. Does n't that sound romantic?"

Hazel had brightened up immediately at the mention of the morrow. But Love observed the effect of her trenchant little homily for days afterward. "How careful I must be!" she said to herself with a sigh. "Uncle Robert used to declare that Hazel was two parts flame and one part steel; and the flame wavers like a candle in a draught. Oh, I must be so much wiser than I know how to be!" Yet in her heart of hearts the girl was aware that it was possible to be even wiser than one knew, since the desire itself was a part of the beautiful, invisible real, which lies so near and easy of access to the most timid and inexperienced hand.

It almost seemed to Love Gordon that her

dream had come true that April morning, when, with Hazel, she walked slowly along the winding road which led to the old house. Masses of the pinky-white blossoms of the spring beauty mingled with the delicate blue of early violets, and the whorls of unfolding ferns pushed boldly under their very feet. Overhead myriad boughs, illumined with the faint glimmer of newly-awakened leaves, tossed against the brilliant sky. Bluebirds were pouring forth their shy, delicious gurgle; meadow-larks called and answered one another with wild sweetness; robins and thrushes caroled lustily in the swaying tree-tops.

Hazel flung her thin arms over her head in an ecstasy. "I *must* scream once, Lovina Gordon!" she cried. And scream she did, a shrill, musical note of joyous abandon, which blended harmoniously enough with all the other sounds of glowing young life. Then Miss Gordon, who was walking sedately as befitted her nineteen years, beheld a pair of black-stockinged legs in active motion, which carried their owner to the

top of the hill in an amazingly short space of time.

Patrick was working industriously in the flower borders; he took off his hat and wiped his forehead as Hazel dashed across the lawn like a youthful whirlwind. "Well, Miss Hazel," he began, looking about him with honest pride, "and how does the old place look to you now?"

"It 's just too beautiful!" cried the little girl. "I can't find any words to say what I think! I just want to dance and make noises!"

An astonishing change had indeed taken place since the stormy March morning when the three had made burglarious entrance into the old house. It no longer appeared sad and forsaken; but in its coat of fresh paint, its windows clean and spotless, revealing glimpses of snowy curtains within, it looked "delightfully homey," as Love Gordon expressed it; and Patrick echoed the words with a happy mist before his eyes.

The neglected lawns had been cleared of

Wings and Fetters—2.

"'IT'S JUST TOO BEAUTIFUL!' CRIED THE LITTLE GIRL."

See p. 88.

weeds and rubbish, and already showed emerald stretches of young grass, which Patrick assured them would improve with every week of good care. The flower beds were gay with clumps of daffodils and narcissus, scarlet and yellow tulips and patches of the hardy little grape hyacinth, which fairly carpeted the ground with the deep blue of its modest blossoms. Golden masses of forsythia and the dainty pink and white of bridal wreath and flowering almond, like patches of sun-tinted, fresh-fallen snow, glimmered here and there against the sombre green of the box hedges. Beyond stretched acres of freshly-ploughed garden mould, flanked by the peach orchard, rosy with bloom.

"Of course, Miss Love," Patrick was explaining, "things look a bit rough yet. I have n't touched the outside of the job, so to say. But think s' I, I 'll get the early vegetables in, an' the lawns an' flower-beds slicked up, so it 'll look as 'o civilized folks lived here. Then I 'll get down to business in the orchards. There 's

where the profit 's to be had. An' it 's going to be a big year for peaches if we don't get a late frost. There ain't no peach on earth fit to hold a candle to a Staten Island peach, an' that 's the solemn truth, miss. I 've often wondered why the farmers 'round here don't plant 'em more."

Miss Gordon endeavored to look intelligent. But that she was not a practical agriculturist was evidenced by her next remark: "Well, Patrick," she said brightly, "I should plant plenty of peach seed if I were you, so that we can have quantities of new trees."

"You 're right, miss, about the new trees," chuckled Patrick; "an' many 's the time I 've planted the seed, as you call it. The trouble with seedlings is that you can't be sure of thim. Plant half a dozen pits of—say, early Crawford, an' mebbe you 'll get as many new sorts, with the chance that most of 'em 'll be cling-stones, an' not worth the ground they stan' in. But I see Collins is wantin' you an' Miss Hazel to

come in the house an' see what she 's been doing."

The old man dropped his spade and accompanied the young lady across the lawn to the veranda, where a stout, middle-aged woman in a resplendent white apron was waiting to receive them. On the way he discoursed volubly concerning hardy perennials, of which he declared there were enough in the garden to stock a nursery. "Folks don't know enough to plant thim now-a-days," he was saying with a show of deep feeling. "They 'll be fooling every year with seeds, or with expensive bedding-out plants they buy from the nurserymen in the spring an' throw away in the fall. An' all the while they might have their gardens growing richer an' handsomer every year with iris an' lilies an' phloxes an' chrysanthemums an' garden-heliotrope an' peonies an'—"

"Hear the man now!" cried Collins in her rich English voice. "He 's gone clean daft over the garden, Miss Lovina; but niver a fin-

ger 'll he lift to help me inside unless it rains a flood!"

That busy hands had been at work within as well as without, the cheerful interior of the house plainly showed. The wide rooms fairly shone with comfort and cleanliness, and the handsome rugs and furniture, saved to the family by more than one friend and well-wisher, had never showed to better advantage. As Love Gordon stood before the window of the pleasant chamber set apart for her own, and looked away over the budding trees to stretches of blue water studded with white sails, and beyond to where the slender spire of a distant church pointed to the bluer heavens, her heart was full almost to bursting. "Suppose I had been selfish," she thought, "and had insisted upon going back to college; we should never have had this beautiful home. I am sure Aunt Margaret cannot help being pleased when she sees it; and Hazel is as happy as a bird." The conviction was growing in this singular young

woman's mind that to be happy one's self, and to pour that happiness into other lives in lavish measure, was better even than an exhaustive knowledge of conic sections and chemistry. "If I can only hold the home together," she said to herself, "I can afford to 'stay a sophomore forever.'"

The two girls met Mrs. Sedgewick in New York the following day. She was looking fragile and pretty in her deep mourning, as she stepped from the drawing-room car to the platform, supported by Mrs. de Forrest's maid. "My poor, dear, homeless girls!" she murmured, as she greeted her daughter and niece; "how I have dreaded this return!"

"But, mother, dear!" said Hazel eagerly, "only wait till you see how beautiful everything is! It is ever so much nicer than the city house."

Mrs. Sedgewick sighed profoundly as she drew her heavy veil over her face. She made no reply.

The long ride across the city and bay proved even more trying than Love had feared. Both girls looked pale and anxious as they supported between them the faltering steps of the silent, shrouded figure.

"We ought to have ordered a carriage," said Hazel in a low voice. "I don't see a cab anywhere, and the trolley is late as usual."

"I wish Patrick had come with us," was Love Gordon's unspoken thought, as she too cast questioning eyes about her.

"Pardon me," murmured a voice at her elbow, "but if you are looking for a carriage, I will call one."

The girl looked up to meet a pair of quiet, grey eyes which she vaguely remembered to have seen before. A few minutes later and she drew a long breath of relief as her precious charge sank back on the comfortable cushions of the brougham, which had mysteriously appeared in answer to the summons of the unknown.

Mrs. Sedgewick seemed exhausted with fatigue

and emotion, and when the carriage drew up before their own door she was half carried into the house by Patrick and spirited away to her own room by the faithful Collins. Miss Gordon presently bethought herself of the cabman, presumably waiting for his fare, and hurried down to the door, only to see the twinkling wheels of the carriage disappearing through the distant gateway. The young lady was both puzzled and annoyed by this circumstance, but she had little time to dwell upon it in the course of the next few hours. Once safely ensconced in the pleasant room, upon the appointments of which both girls had lavished their nicest care, Mrs. Sedgewick had immediately succumbed to one of her dreaded nervous attacks, in which she bewailed her desolate and forsaken condition. Bereft of husband, home, friends, health and property, why did she continue to live? she demanded of Love, who hung over the frail figure in an agony of love and anxiety. Why could she

not die and be at rest, since all that made life worth living for had been swept away?

"You have me, mother," sobbed poor little Hazel, who had been running about wildly with her hat pulled over one eye and her jacket still tightly buttoned in quest of hot water-bottles, camphor and warm flannels. "You have me, mother, and Love and Pat—"

The child stopped short, warned by Love's uplifted brows, and turned to the window with an aching lump in her slender throat that seemed to swell and swell past endurance, as she gazed through starting tears at the green lawn and the gay, nodding spring flowers in the neat borders. She had actually been happy, she told herself in a passion of regret; had laughed and danced and sung and run races with the grey kitten which was at that moment frolicking with some whirling leaves in the shrubbery. How could she have been so heartless when dear, dear daddy was gone?

"But perhaps dear daddy has n't gone so

very far," said Love, when at bedtime that night the forlorn little figure crept in to pour out her remorseful thoughts. "Don't you remember, dear, that 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy,' and why should it not always be near? I have been so glad to see you happy; and so, I am sure, has dear daddy, who is so happy himself that he wants nothing else than to see us cheerful and busy, doing with our might what our hands find to do. Let me read you a good-night chapter out of the best of all the books, then you shall cuddle into bed with me and go to sleep. We must try and help mother to find the sunshine, too."

CHAPTER VI

HAZEL'S DISCOVERY

"OH, Love, do come out here a minute," cried Hazel, thrusting her curly head in at an open window one bright morning a week later; "I want you to see the very oddest thing!" She pointed up to one of the pointed gables, low-dropping over the quaint octagonal windows of the attic story.

"What is it?" said Love, staring up vaguely at the gray old roof, as she shielded her eyes from the downpouring flood of May sunshine.

"Bees!" shouted the little girl excitedly. "Don't you see them flying about the roof, and going in and out under the eaves?"

"Bees?" repeated Miss Gordon wonderingly. "How can bees be up there?"

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"They 're using our house for a hive!" laughed Hazel. "Patrick says there's probably a roof of honey over the attic."

The young lady turned for a confirmation of this curious statement to Patrick, who leaned on the handle of his lawn-mower, his face one broad smile of enjoyment. "It 's a fact, Miss Love," he said. "I remember that there used to be bees on the old place when I was a boy. There was a whole row of hives east of the greenhouse yonder, an' many 's the idle minute I 've spent watching the little rascals coming in loaded with pollen. I don't know who made 'way with the hives, nor when they done it; but there ain't a sign of thim about the place now. The bees must have stood by their home, though, an' took to the house when the family moved out; for thim 's the real old stock—yellow Italians, the very best of all the bees. I 've noticed thim 'round the fruit trees the last week or more; but I only just found out where they was hiving."

Love watched the gable attentively for a mo-

ment, and there, sure enough, were myriads of darting flecks coming and going in the bright air. "Can we get the honey?" she asked in the practical tone of a housekeeper.

"Not without tearing up the roof from the outsied, or breaking away the lath and plaster from the attic chamber," said the old man, shaking his head. "They 've been cunning in their settling—thim bees—an' picked the one place where we can't get at thim. I 've been up there, an' looked the attic over pretty careful. If they 'd gone the other side, we could ha' got thim easy by just taking off the boards."

"I wish they were down here in a hive," said Hazel. "*I* should like to see them coming in with pollen."

"You would that, Miss Hazel, dear," agreed Patrick. "Mebbe we 'll ketch thim swarming before long, if we watch thim good; then we 'll take the swarm." The rattle and whirr of the mowing machine drowned his last words as he

moved slowly away, leaving a wake of fragrant young grass blades behind him.

Hazel appeared to be deep in meditation at luncheon time. "I was thinking about the swarm," she explained. "Do you know how a swarm looks, Love?"

Miss Gordon confessed that she had never seen one, but hazarded an opinion based on her fund of general information, that the bees generally formed a bunch or cluster upon some tree or shrub.

"But why should they do that, Lovina Gordon?" persisted the little girl. "What is the sense of forming a bunch or cluster when all they want is a new place to live? I should think the older bees would find out just where they were going to move; then the others could just fly there and go in."

"You 'll have to ask the queen bee for information on that point, I imagine," said Miss Gordon, laughing. "She is the most important

personage in the hive, and governs devoted subjects."

The late-starting leaves on the big catalpa tree back of the house were "as big as squirrel's ears," and Patrick was accordingly planting his sweet corn before Hazel's observations of the lofty honey-makers resulted in an announcement which roused even Mrs. Sedgewick from her sad apathy.

Love Gordon had been reading aloud to the invalid, her voice sinking to a soft murmur of sound as she perceived the white lids drooping over the listener's eyes. She was on the point of closing the volume that she might steal quietly away to a neglected task below, when the sound of Hazel's rapid feet on the stairs presaged her impetuous entrance into her mother's room.

"Oh, mother, dear!" she cried, "I do hope I have n't waked you up—if you were going to sleep; but please look out of the window, and you too, Lovina Gordon! I do believe there is a swarm of bees in the tree!"

"A swarm of bees?" repeated Mrs. Sedgewick wonderingly. "Where did they come from?"

"Out of the roof," cried Hazel. "I saw lots of them flying about this morning, and hanging in little bunches on the eaves. Then bye-and-bye they all flew up in a cloud, and buzzed about in the big tree. Now they look just like a brown bag! Do come down, Love, and help get them!" She was gone again in a veritable whirl of curling locks and flying skirts before her cousin could answer.

"What an excitable child she is!" observed Mrs. Sedgewick in an aggrieved voice. "If I only had a tithe of her health and good spirits! But Hazel was never like me in her organization in the least particular." She walked to the window as she spoke and languidly looked out. "There is something very singular in the tree," she said with some increase of animation. "See, my dear, hanging from the bough right opposite the window! I wonder if it can be possible that the child is right?"

"It is certainly a swarm of bees," said Love, looking over her aunt's shoulder. "What a curious sight!"

And a curious sight it was. The bees hung in a great golden-brown cluster from one of the giant branches of the catalpa, their wings and bodies glistening dully in the sunshine as they crawled slowly about the surface of the living ball. Now and then numbers of them were seen to dart away in different directions, when the whole cluster swayed and heaved as if about to fall apart.

"Are n't you ever coming down, Love?" shouted Hazel from the foot of the tree. "Oh, we must get them! Just think what fun it will be to have bees of our very own, and watch them making honey! Do come down—quick!"

Miss Gordon's imagination was almost as much stirred as Hazel's at sight of all this winged wealth, waiting, as it were, to be gathered. "I wish we could get them," she said breathlessly

as she reached the little girl's side. "Where is Patrick?"

"More 's the pity, Miss Love," chimed in Collins regretfully, "but he 's gone to town not an hour since to fetch his tomato and cauliflower plants."

Mrs. Miles had thrown her apron over her head and was staring with all her blue eyes at the strange sight in the tree.

"Pees, vas it?" said a rumbling voice, the note of interrogation ending in a chuckling laugh. "Vell, you haf von pig job to get dem, I pet!"

"Ah, Lener," said Collins, resuming her wonted air of severe dignity as she turned to greet the newcomer.

He was a broad, red-faced German, and the reason of his appearance was evident in the market-basket of early strawberries he carried on his arm. "You 'll pe vantin' a guart or so —eh? An' I 've ferry goot salads—cress, lettuce, spinach—on de vagon."

"Can you tell me how to get those bees, Mr. Vegetable-man?" said Hazel politely. "We want them very much."

"Ho-ho!" laughed the worthy German. "I 'll pet you vant dem! I don' know zo ferry much 'pout pees," he went on; "but you vill haf a—vat you call him—a hive, *nicht wahr*? An' somevon climb up de tree un' saw der limb, un' shake dem in der hive; den you haf dem safe."

"Yes, but we have n't any hive," said Hazel mournfully. "And Patrick has gone away."

"I guess you porrow a hive all right," said Lener hopefully. "Mister Lough, he is a ferry goot, kind man, un' he keep pees. He vill lend you a hive, I pet."

"Where does he live?" demanded Hazel. "I shall go and ask him this minute!"

"Just the next house pelow; Mr. Lough he lives dere. You ask him. I 'll pet you vill get dem, if dey don't fly away."

"I shall go this minute and ask him," repeated the little girl. Then she glanced up

again into the tree. "Somebody ought to stay and watch them; can't you, Collins?"

"Bless you, child, I 've got to go in this minute!" cried Collins with a fine show of indignation. "I 've got more to do than I 'd have han's for if I could be makin' myself into three women!"

"You haf to vatch dem pees, sure," put in the German, wagging his head warningly; "sometimes dey hangs fer two—t'ree days, jus' like dat. But ven de vether is goot dey flies off in von hour, maype. You go upstairs, missy, un' trow vaser on dem; vet dem down goot, den dey tink it rain, un' dey hang dere."

"Will you go and ask that man for the hive, Love? Please, go—please! I do want to get them," begged Hazel in a fever of excitement. "I 'll go up in mother's room and throw water at them."

"I don't see how we could get them even if we have the hive," began Love; but, at sight of the big tears starting in Hazel's brown eyes,

she turned and ran lightly away toward the house which the obliging vegetable man pointed out to her.

"Jus' go down tro de leedle gate dere," he said encouragingly, "un' you comes to Mister Lough's house, in der trees dere. He is a goot man, un' ferry kind. I pet he gets dem pees fer you. You jus' dell him I send you."

It was a seductive little path winding about among giant tree-boles and disappearing behind a group of low-growing evergreens, which hid all but the red roof and clustered chimneys of the house from view. Miss Gordon had speculated vaguely as to who the neighbor might be whose grounds bordered upon their own; apparently no one but the postman trod the narrow path which led through the little gate aforementioned. Love drew a pleasing mental picture of "the goot Mister Lough" as she hurried along, her skirts brushing the fragrant dew from clustered ferns and patches of the snowy lily of the valley, which had run wild under the

big chestnuts. She was bareheaded, and the May wind ruffled her brown hair at its own sweet will, leaving a sparkle in her eyes and a faint flush on her cheeks, which matched the apple-blossoms just bursting into bloom.

Bees? Yes; "the goot Mister Lough" certainly possessed them, for here on the sunny terrace behind the house were rows of hives facing the south, every one manifestly the center of active business operations. The girl paused a moment, and watched the golden laborers coming and going with ceaseless energy. Then she hurried on with fresh courage to prefer her request. She had determined that Mr. Lough was an elderly man of benignant aspect. The house was undoubtedly old; it was also very still—strangely still, she thought, as she stepped lightly upon a sunny little porch, whose green Dutch door, open at the top, revealed a glimpse of a wide, old-fashioned hall. There was a curious brass knocker on the door, representing a gorgon with the most jovial expression

of countenance. Love lifted it gently and tapped once—twice—thrice.

A middle-aged man-servant started up from somewhere in the shadowy hall. He looked (Love thought) excessively surprised as he stared out of the Dutch door. "Does Mr. Lough live here?" she asked. "May—I—see him—for just a moment?" she added, in an uncomfortable flutter of apprehension and embarrassment, as the wonder in the elderly man-servant's eyes widened them to their utmost. "I am sure he is an old man—a nice, good old man," she said to herself. "Only nice, good old men keep bees." She was reading his name on the modest door-plate, as she thus re-assured herself. The name sounded strong and pleasant—John Graham Lough. But she was nevertheless aware by this time that she had forgotten her hat, and that the wind had taken liberties with her hair. She had three-quarters of a mind to run away while she waited for the wide-eyed man to inform his master of her

presence, and flushed a frightened rose all over her face when the closed door suddenly opened, and a man, evidently the master, and—well, certainly not the old man she had pictured to herself as the benign keeper of the bees—appeared on the threshold.

A flash of recognition in the grey eyes deepened her embarrassment. "Oh, did—did you—" she began, and stopped short, ready to cry with vexation.

"This is Miss Gordon, is it not?" he was saying easily. "I was so glad to be of service to you that day. I had intended giving myself the pleasure of calling before this; but I was told that Mrs. Sedgewick was ill—too ill to receive visitors."

"But I did n't know that it was you—that is, that you lived here," faltered Love, miserably conscious that the keen grey eyes were looking quietly at her breeze-blown hair and frightened, flushed face. She pulled herself together with a great effort. "I have often wanted to thank

you, though. It was your carriage, was it not?"

"I did n't care to ride that day," he said carelessly. "I had intended to send Parker home without me." He had stepped out and was standing by her side now. Love noticed, in a lightning glance, that he carried a fountain pen between the fingers of his right hand.

"I must apologize for intruding," she said with dignity. "I think our heads were all turned a little this morning with the bees. The vegetable man told me that you were a good, kind man and kept bees. There is a swarm hanging in the tree behind our house, and my little cousin, Hazel, insisted that I should come over and borrow a hive."

She looked the picture of contrition, as she glanced again at the pen in the strong, brown fingers. Somehow that pen linked itself of a sudden with the pleasant-sounding name on the door-plate. "Could it be?" she asked herself with a certain awe, as she remembered the charming

essays, illustrated with the daintiest of drawings of birds, flowers and bees, which she had read with increasing delight the winter before.

"Oh, I am not at all busy," he was saying with a genial laugh, which lighted up the grey eyes amazingly. "I would n't miss such a lark with the bees for worlds. I am infinitely obliged to old Lener for giving me such a good character." He turned to the elderly man-servant, who still wore the expression of extreme astonishment which Love's sudden appearance had caused. "Fetch a hive from the stable loft, Thomson, and hand me my veil and gloves, will you? I shall want a few frames of brood."

Love's eyes were full of gratitude as she sped away to assure Hazel of the success of her mission. Her face was still rosy with embarrassment, and she shrugged her shoulders with a little laugh. "He will think me a wild country girl," she said to herself. "But never mind; Hazel will have her bees."

CHAPTER VII

THE BEE MASTER

HAZEL looked a picture of the deepest woe as she came running to meet her cousin. "Oh, Love," she cried breathlessly, "I went up in mother's room and threw water on those bees. It was awfully hard work, and I spilled it all over the floor, but mother did n't scold a bit. I got two or three big splashes on them—the bees, I mean; and then little bunches of them began to tumble off in the queerest way, but I kept right on throwing as hard as I could. They must have thought it was a pretty big storm, for all of a sudden, while I was gone for more water, I heard mother call; I ran as fast as I could, but it was too late—they were all flying up in the air."

"Then they are gone!" exclaimed Miss Gordon, pausing irresolutely. "I must go back and tell Mr. Lough not to bring the hive. I know I disturbed him at his work. Only think, Hazel, he is John Graham Lough—the one that wrote 'The Heart of Wild Folk.' Do you remember my reading it to you last winter?"

"Truly?"

"Yes, I am quite sure of it. He was busy writing, I fear, when I knocked. I supposed him to be some nice, friendly old farmer from the way the vegetable man spoke of him."

"And you talked with him, Lovina Gordon, and asked him to bring a hive for our bees?" cried the little girl. "How perfectly splendid that is! I want to see him, too. Everything always happens to you, Love, just because you are a fairy princess. Besides, the bees have n't really gone away; they 're down the chimney. I suppose they went in to get out of 'de vetter,' as that darling old German would say. Only fancy, if it had n't been for him we would never—

But here he comes now with a man carrying a hive. You must introduce me, Love, and I shall tell him I have read every one of his *lovely* stories!"

"No—no, Hazel," said Miss Gordon in a low but energetic tone. "You must wait until—well, at least until he calls, and we have been properly introduced." And again the young lady's cheeks took on the delicate hue of the apple-buds overhead.

But Hazel was in the wildest spirits, and was not to be curbed by any imaginary reins of propriety. "Properly introduced!" she repeated, tossing the wild, elfin locks out of her eyes. "You 've made the first call, Lovina Gordon, please remember that!"

"I shall not be likely to forget it, I am afraid," murmured the girl, turning to greet the rescuer of vagrant swarms, who now approached them, carrying his bee-veil in one hand and in the other a curious-looking implement from which issued a pungent smoke. "I am afraid

I have put you to a great deal of trouble, Mr. Lough, and for no purpose," she said quietly, adding, "This is my cousin, Hazel Sedgewick, and she tells me the bees have flown while I was gone."

Mr. Lough acknowledged the introduction with a bow and a smile, which completely and for all time won for him the devoted allegiance of the little girl. "Has the swarm really gone?" he asked, a distinctly disappointed expression creeping over his handsome face. "Now, what a pity! If you had only wet them down a bit with the hose."

Hazel had been gazing at the speaker with a rapt, awed expression of countenance, which brought an irrepressible smile to Love's eyes. She found her tongue at this juncture. "I did throw water on them," she said; "I threw Collins' biggest saucepan full as fast as I could fill it, and two or three times I hit them—smack! They thought it was storming too hard, I guess, for they went down the chimney."

"Ah—ha!" exclaimed Mr. Lough, with an amused laugh at this frank statement. "But they want just a gentle shower to keep them quiet. They are very wise people—the bees; their couriers took alarm at once, and hurried their queen out of harm's way. Down the chimney, you say? Which chimney? Perhaps we can get them, after all."

Hazel pointed out the highest chimney of them all, at the top of one of the grey old gables. "They are roof bees, you know," she explained, her fear of the author seeming to have suddenly evaporated under the light of his kindly eyes. "Our whole house is probably roofed with honey; only we can't get it. But I think it is a nice thought, anyway. I like to lie in bed stormy nights and think of the bees overhead all snug in their great, white, delicious combs."

Mr. Lough seemed very much interested in the little girl's fanciful thoughts, for he walked slowly along at her side, carelessly dangling

"the smoker," as he called it, and asked many questions about the curious roof-dwellers. "I thought at first that you had found one of my run-away swarms," he said; "but this is undoubtedly an overflow from the giant colony in the roof."

"Was that the reason you were so willing to come?" demanded Hazel, eyeing him with sudden suspicion. "Did you mean to take them home with you?"

Mr. Lough laughingly disclaimed any such intention. "Run-away swarms are always treasure trove," he added. "That was the way I started my apiary. I was walking out in my garden one morning, and almost stumbled into a great swarm which had settled on a rose-bush in full bloom, weighing it quite to the ground. It was a pretty sight, I assure you, though not half so interesting as your roof colony."

"Where did you get your hive?" asked Hazel, with breathless interest.

"I had n't one, of course," he said. "One is

rarely ready for Dame Fortune when she drops a plum into one's lap. So I took—what do you suppose?—a nail-keg, washed it well with molasses and water, and shook the swarm off the rose-bush into it. The queen took kindly to her odd quarters, and stayed there contentedly enough; for it was really not unlike the hollow tree-trunk, which is, after all, the home every swarm is looking for."

"Just think of that, Love," said the little girl, turning with a disappointed air to her cousin. "*We* might have taken a nail-keg; Patrick has lots of them to put his bulbs in. We could have climbed up in the tree and made those bees go in; don't you think so?"

Love Gordon shook her head with an answering flash of amusement to that which shone in the grey eyes. "I am afraid the nail-keg and the bees combined would have presented some insuperable difficulties in the branches of that catalpa," she said.

"I should have *tried*, anyway, Lovina Gor-

don," said Hazel with spirit. "You know you have told me over and over again that genius is often only great determination to try. I should certainly have tried, if I had only thought of it. So simple, too—a nail-keg!"

"But, Miss Hazel," interposed Mr. Lough, "I feel obliged to call your attention to the fact that a swarm of bees is in reality an army of Amazons, each warrior armed with a sword sharper than any Damascus blade that was ever forged, and ready to die for her beloved queen. This curious little apparatus, which belches smoke when I press the bellows, is one of my weapons of defence, and furthermore I retire behind an armor of gauze like this, which is nevertheless sword-proof—since the Amazons carry short weapons. Then I am ready to face the army. Do you see?"

"Do you mean that they would have stung me?"

"Undoubtedly," said the experienced bee-keeper gravely. "Though many professional

apiarists go fearlessly among their bees, and handle their swarms without protection, I should advise you to begin as I did not, and avoid several hundred sword-thrusts from the indignant warriors, who abhor the inexperience and frightened movements of a novice."

Hazel drew a deep breath of enjoyment. "It is going to be the most interesting thing," she exclaimed. "I don't think I should mind being stung a few times if we only get them. Do you suppose we can get them?"

"I will do my best—if Miss Gordon will permit me to take a great liberty," said Mr. Lough, bowing to the young lady. "I shall be obliged to go up on the roof by way of the attic. Thomson will go with me to carry the hive."

"I fear we are putting you to entirely too much trouble," began Miss Gordon hesitatingly.

"Oh, Love, don't say that!" cried the little girl beseechingly. "He does want to get that swarm; don't you truly want to get it, Mr.

Lough? If you don't, just lend me that funny smoking thing and the veil and I will—"

"Hazel!" syllabled Miss Gordon, with a warning glance, before which the child's sparkling eyes sank with some embarrassment.

"I did n't mean to be rude," she said faintly; "but, oh, I do want those bees!"

Mr. Lough smiled encouragingly at the little girl. "You have the true bee-keeper's spirit," he said kindly. "And I assure you, Miss Gordon, that I shall feel greatly disappointed if I do not succeed in hiving that swarm. I am not sure that I shall succeed, for I see that the workers are already busy, and it is not easy to entice a swarm which fancies itself nicely settled. But I propose to appeal to the cupidity of the queen as well as of her workers. Would you like to see the inducement I shall hold out?"

He motioned to his man as he spoke, who set down at their feet the oblong, wooden box he was carrying. "This is the hive," he was

beginning, when all three looked up at sound of a gentle, hesitating footfall.

"Why, mother, dearest!" cried Hazel, voicing the astonishment which Love endeavored to repress as she presented Mr. Lough.

He cheerfully congratulated the lady on being sufficiently recovered to be out in the glorious May weather, which was, as he expressed it, "the crest of the year."

Mrs. Sedgewick smiled, and replied with all her old-time grace that she really could not resist the temptation to come out and see what was going on. "We were quite startled out of our usual routine this morning by the strange sight in our tree-top," she added.

Love chanted a jubilate in her heart of hearts as she gazed at the faint-smiling lips of the speaker. Then, quite involuntarily, her brown eyes turned with a grateful look upon the centre of their little group.

John Lough both saw and understood the two glances, and instantly there sprang up in his

heart a knightly desire to help this brave, young burden-bearer, of whose endeavors he had already heard somewhat from a mutual acquaintance. "I was about to show these young ladies the incentive to further change of residence which I shall shortly hold out to the homeless queen and her nation," he said, addressing himself to Mrs. Sedgewick. "This hive, as you see, is simply a covered box of somewhat singular construction, since it contains eight of these hanging frames."

He lifted out of the uncovered hive an oblong square of discolored honeycomb, enclosed in a narrow strip of wood. "This is a nursery, partly filled with bee-babies," he went on; "there is also enough honey stored about the edges to tempt a hungry swarm thrown suddenly upon its own resources. Do you see these tiny, white larvæ, each in its own nest, Mrs. Sedgewick?"

"How very curious and interesting!" said the lady, looking less and less like an invalid,

as a faint color rose in her cheeks. "I am sure I never knew anything about bees except that they made honey." Then she added easily what Hazel had longed to say for the last half hour. "I have taken the very greatest pleasure in reading your recent essays, Mr. Lough. I believe we have a mutual friend in Mrs. de Forrest; she told me some time ago that you were living on Staten Island, but I had no idea that you were to be our neighbor."

"We are most happily met," said the young man, whose manner had stiffened slightly at the mention of his authorship, as though the subject were distasteful to him. "I learned of your nearness only a few days since, and was about to give myself the pleasure of making your acquaintance."

"But this is ever so much nicer," put in the irrepressible Hazel, whose eyes had been wandering during this exchange of civilities between the empty hive and the distant chimney, about whose top golden-brown specks were beginning

to fly busily. "If you had come to make a prim pasteboard call, I might not have seen you at all!"

Mrs. Sedgewick looked shocked; but John Lough's grey eyes twinkled pleasantly as he looked down into the glowing little face upturned to his. "I think it is ever so much nicer, too," he said decidedly. "Pasteboard calls, Miss Hazel, are my pet abomination. And now, if you will kindly show me the way to the attic—you will permit me, Mrs. Sedgewick, in the interests of bee-culture—I will pay my respects to the royal lady in the chimney."

Ten minutes later the two men could be seen making their way cautiously across the steep roofs to the populous chimney. The man, Thomson, had also assumed the defensive armor worn by his master. Their operations were brief, and to the two girls watching from the ground highly mysterious.

"I don't believe he can get them, after all," cried Hazel in a disappointed tone. "They 've

only set that box on top of the chimney, and now they 're coming away!"

"Would n't the queen go in?" she inquired dolefully, when Mr. Lough rejoined them, looking quite satisfied with his adventure.

"That remains to be seen," he replied. "I have simply removed the bottom-board of the hive and set it over the mouth of the chimney. In order to get out at all, the bees will be forced to come and go through the proper entrance. The chances are that the queen, who will at once be informed of the brood-chamber above by her attendants, will crawl up into the hive and begin laying her eggs in the vacant cells. The whole swarm will follow as a matter of course, and then we shall have them—and a finer swarm one seldom sees. They are pure Italian, and there must be a half bushel of them."

"Do they measure bees by the bushel?" laughed the little girl.

"Sometimes," said John Lough, his eyes

laughing back at her, though his face was quite sober—which was a way that he had, as she soon discovered. "I think we may safely set down your swarm, Miss Hazel, as worth the proverbial load of hay."

Both girls looked inquiringly at him.

"You have surely heard the old Mother Goose rhyme," he said pleasantly. "'A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay; a swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon; a swarm of bees in July is not worth a fly,' which simply means that there will be little or no honey made that season. In the days when that rhyme was written bee-keepers knew no better than to smother their swarms with sulphur fumes in the autumn, and so of course a swarm which had barely established itself was scarce worth the killing."

"What a cruel thing to do!" cried Love Gordon, with a fine show of indignation. "I should never want any honey if I had to do wholesale murder to get it!"

"You like chicken, Lovina Gordon," said Hazel incisively. "And only this morning you were saying how delicious the ham was!"

The young lady blushed; then her laugh mingled with John Lough's. "Ah, that is one of the weak points in our civilization," he said gravely. "I fancy few of us would care for much on our tables that we find very palatable if we were obliged to personally assist at the preceding sacrifice. But to return—not to our muttons, but to our bees. I shall come back to investigate the conditions on the roof the day after to-morrow. If I find, as I fully expect, that the swarm has established itself in the hive, I shall then slip the bottom-board into place, close up the entrance with a strip of wire netting, and Thomson will lower it to the ground by means of a rope and a sailor's hitch. The rest is a serial story, as you will find. And I think you will tell me later that it is the most interesting one you ever read."

Mrs. Sedgewick had retreated to the sunny

veranda, where Collins had made her comfortable with a steamer-chair and a plenitude of wraps. "My nerves are so completely shattered that I seldom receive visitors," she said plaintively to the young man when he came to take his leave of her; "but I had already determined to make an exception of you, dear Mr. Lough. I do hope you have not completely tired yourself out in gratifying the whim of my little wild girl here."

John Lough assured her that he had taken the keenest pleasure in the morning's adventure. He added that he was completely at their service in any and all ways. Then he strode away through the little gate, and shortly disappeared behind the shrubbery.

"I think he is just *too* lovely for anything!" sighed Hazel rapturously—a remark which drew a well-merited reproof from her cousin.

"You might say that Mr. Lough has been very kind, and that you like him exceedingly," said Miss Gordon, with quite the air of an

experienced governess; "but the expression, 'just too lovely for anything,' is little short of slang, and really vulgar."

"Well, I know he thought you were just lovely enough for something," retorted her pupil, with a disrespectful giggle, which had the effect of rousing Mrs. Sedgewick to the point of delivering quite a comprehensive lecture on etiquette in general, and the proper conduct of little girls in particular, to which both teacher and pupil listened with due attention.

CHAPTER VIII

WINGED AMAZONS

SUBSEQUENT events proved the truth of John Lough's cheerful predictions concerning the bees. There was a curious sight one evening after sunset when the hive, bound about with rope, was lowered carefully to the ground. Patrick was on hand to assist in the important task, and he was almost as delighted as Hazel when the hive was safely set on a sunny slope already sprinkled with snowy clover-blooms.

"Thim 's the flowers they like best of all," said Patrick with enthusiasm, "an' the tulip-trees are all in blow, besides; there 'll be no lack of work for the little rascals, come mornin'."

"But won't they lose their way, being put here when they 're all asleep?" asked Hazel anxiously.

"They are not asleep," said John Lough. "Just listen a minute and you will hear them humming."

"I hear them!" cried the little girl excitedly. "Do come and listen, Love!"

John Lough fancied that the girlish face which bent toward the hive in obedience to this summons was more serious and pallid than he remembered it. "How is Mrs. Sedgewick this evening?" he asked.

"Aunt Margaret is feeling better now," said Miss Gordon, glancing up at him gravely. "She has been very unhappy all day, and that made her ill after a while."

"Would she enjoy driving about the country these beautiful mornings?" he asked impulsively. "If you think she would, do let me send the carriage around. It would be a real favor," he added quickly, as he noticed the flush that

mantled the girl's cheek. "I infinitely prefer walking such weather as this, and the horses often suffer for want of exercise. You will wonder why I keep them, perhaps," he went on after a pause. "They were mother's, and she was fond of them. She died last fall."

"Yes, I know," said Love in a low voice. "Aunt Margaret has told me of—of Mrs. Lough. Mrs. de Forest often spoke of her." Her brown eyes were soft and pitying as they rested for a moment on the young man's face. "You must be very lonely," she added, with simplicity.

John Lough met the clear, compassionate eyes, and held them for an instant with his own. "Yes," he said gravely, "I am—very lonely.

"If they fly out quickly in the morning," Hazel was saying to Patrick, who stood by, gazing at the hive with an air of the greatest satisfaction, "they will go back to the chimney, I am afraid."

"That is precisely what they would do," said John Lough. "I perceive more plainly than ever that Nature intended you to be a mistress of bees, for you anticipate their movements like a veteran. But now I will show you what we must do to make them stop long enough to find out where home is." He pulled several handfuls of grass and clover-blossoms and heaped them loosely on the alighting board, so that the long, narrow hive door was almost closed. "This will prevent them from hurrying off to their work in the morning," he said. "They will be forced to make their way slowly through the grass blades, and this unlooked-for circumstance will cause them to notice the hive and its surroundings more carefully than they otherwise would. Some of them—giddy young things a few weeks old perhaps—will forget and go back to the top of the chimney. You will see them there to-morrow. But sooner or later they will all find the way either to their new home or the old one."

"Do the bee-babies have to work?" asked Hazel wonderingly.

"They begin their labors in the hive by taking care of the younger children," he told her. "You remember that yesterday I showed you the larvæ in their cradles. These bee-babies require a great deal of tending and feeding for about eight days. They are watched over by experienced old nurses, who seal or cap over the cradles with a thin, paper-like substance on the ninth day. A week later the young bees gnaw through this coverlid and crawl out, all yellowish white and downy like newly hatched chickens."

"Oh, I wish I could see them!" cried Hazel, clapping her hands.

"If we look into the hive in about ten days, we shall see plenty of them," said the young man, smiling at her eagerness. "These promising infants are apparently allowed to do exactly as they please, and for a day or so they wander slowly about the combs, poking their

downy heads into everybody's business, eating the new honey out of the great vats of golden liquid, and having a good time generally."

Hazel looked inquiring. "I thought they put the honey into tiny little cells," she said doubtfully.

"But the bee-baby is n't as large as you are, dear," said Love Gordon, who was listening as eagerly as the little girl. "Every tiny cell, as you call it, would seem almost as large as a barrel would to you."

"Of course," assented Hazel. "But I am so stupid!"

Stupid was not quite the word to apply to the sparkling little face, John Lough thought. He went on with an air of extreme enjoyment of his theme and audience: "I have always wondered whether the head nurse lectures these meddlesome young persons, or whether the sense of duty awakens in them at sight of the self-denying labors going on about them. At all events, they are seldom more than three days

old when we find them busily taking care of the infants who are still in their cradles. They mix the pollen and honey into the mysterious, milky-looking food in which the larvæ seems to float, and on which it makes such astonishing growth. They also prepare the royal jelly for the queen cells. But that is a story all by itself. When the young bees are a week or ten days old, they take their first flight out of doors. If you watch, you will see the golden little creatures frolicking about the entrance to the hive, tumbling over each other and getting in the way of the sober old bees, who are never seen to scold or get out of patience with the young ones, no matter how much they have to do."

"I shall tell that to Collins," said Hazel with feeling. "She does so hate to have me in the kitchen when she is cooking; and, of course, I must go there sometimes if I am ever to learn. Love knows everything about cooking already."

"You should n't make irrelevant remarks, Hazel," said Miss Gordon, coloring. "When

do the young workers begin the serious business of honey-making, Mr. Lough?"

"When they reach the age of two weeks," he replied, "though sometimes much earlier. But we must remember that the whole life of the worker is very short. In the height of the honey-making season it is rarely more than seven weeks. One will often find scores of worn-out laborers, their wings ragged and torn, hopping about in the grass near the hives. I spent many an hour in the early days of my bee-keeping rescuing these crippled veterans and restoring them to the hive. But I found that they usually declined to enter, crawling away again to die in some quiet corner as far as possible from home. They are seemingly unwilling to hamper the young bees with their presence, though they would live perhaps several weeks longer in the quiet and plenty of the brood chamber."

"They ought to be allowed a comfortable old age with quantities of the very best honey—or

that royal jelly which sounds so perfectly delicious!" said Hazel stoutly. "I think I shall have a nice new hive on purpose for those poor old bees. I could pick them up and put them in, could n't I?"

"You could, certainly," replied Mr. Lough seriously; "but they would n't stay there. Besides, any such home for aged and infirm bees of good moral character would certainly start the younger generation on a career of crime and burglary. For they are very much like human beings, after all, and are apt to become demoralized by great stores of unguarded wealth within easy reach." The young man glanced at his watch as he spoke. "I want to tell you just one more thing about the young bees," he said; "then I must go. Unfortunately, I have one of those detestable 'pasteboard' calls to make this evening, which can be neither postponed nor evaded."

Love Gordon's expressive eyes shone with amusement at this naive remark. He caught

the sparkle in their brown depths, and his face reddened. "Mrs. de Forest will have told you what a confirmed hermit I am," he said frankly. "I shall not apologize, but merely warn you that I am likely to talk my audience and the bees to a finish on occasions like this."

"I am so glad!" cried Hazel, with unbounded enthusiasm. Miss Gordon said nothing; but John Lough seemed satisfied with the look she gave him."

"The prettiest sight in all bee days," he went on cheerfully, "is to see the young worker bringing in its first load of pollen. It circles round and round the hive with an air of the greatest importance; then, alighting with a loud, humming sound, pushes rudely past the other bees, and hurries in with its burden. When one has an observation hive—one with glass sides, Miss Hazel—one can follow the young braggart as he bustles within, swaggering about, for all the world like a small boy with his first pair of trousers, jostling the nurses, scurrying

about among the comb-builders, and even disturbing the august queen in her rounds of the royal nurseries. The youthful neophyte is gently inducted into the art of kicking off his load into the pollen cells, where experts are waiting to mix and pack it away in the shape of multi-colored bee-bread for future consumption."

In the hasty leave-taking that followed, the master of bees paused long enough to assure Love Gordon that the carriage would be at the door at ten o'clock the following morning. The young lady mentioned the fact to her aunt that same evening, as she assisted the invalid in preparing for the night."

Mrs. Sedgewick glanced curiously at the girl's sparkling face. "It is certainly very good of Mr. Lough to have thought of me," she said. "But I shall hardly be able to avail myself of his kindness, I fear. I simply could not bear to drive, now that my own carriages are gone. It would remind me too bitterly of the past."

She sighed heavily, then added in a somewhat querulous tone: "John Lough is, of course, immensely clever and all that; but he has not the slightest knowledge of the world. Mrs. de Forest told me that he was always the shyest mortal alive, and his mother, who was widowed young, allowed him his own way in everything. They traveled abroad for years; then her health failed, and the two settled down in the country here, where there is, of course, absolutely no society. Mrs. de Forest invited them to Newport last summer. Of course every one was inclined to lionize young Lough, not only because he is really quite a litterateur, but he is immensely rich besides. The denouement was that he simply withdrew into his shell, and declined to be coaxed out. One of the season's greatest belles, they say, was quite inconsolable for a time."

Her aunt's tone and manner were so like her old self that Love Gordon asked a harmless question or two as she moved lightly about the

room. But Mrs. Sedgewick's manner had suddenly stiffened for some unaccountable reason. "I really hope we shall not see too much of him," she said with a fretful sigh. "You are not 'out,' remember, and I cannot do anything for you socially, as I had planned and intended before your poor uncle died."

"Oh, Aunt Margaret," murmured Love, her cheeks aflame, "please do not think of me at all. I am sure I should not care for society."

The girl felt both hurt and mortified as she sought her own room, though she could scarcely have told herself why. This new and vaguely unpleasant ache in her heart caused her, curiously enough, to close her shutters with haste, thereby shutting out the view of John Lough's red roofs in their picturesque setting of evergreens and apple-blossoms. Nor did she even glance that way the next morning with the pleasant anticipation which had been growing, all unknown to herself, for many days past.

At breakfast time Hazel came in with glow-

ing cheeks, brimming over with wonderful information regarding her bees, which were coming and going like old residents.

"Patrick has taken away the grass now," said the little girl happily. "He says they have all made their first flight, and I don't see very many around the chimney. Mr. Lough told me to let him know if there were. He said he would put a piece of honeycomb on the chimney, and they would gather on that at nighttime, then he could bring them down and make them go into the hive. Is n't he good, Love? And don't you think he has the handsomest eyes? They are just like deep, deep pools of clear water! Oh, I do hope he will come and tell us about the queen and the royal jelly to-day. He almost promised me last night."

"Hazel," said Miss Gordon with stately gravity, "we must be careful not to impose on Mr. Lough's good nature. I think Patrick can do all that is necessary for the bees now; and

I will buy you a book which will tell you all about them."

"But you know that is n't half so interesting, Lovina Gordon," persisted Hazel. "Don't you like to hear him talk? Don't you think he is nice and handsome and—yes, I will say it—*lovely?*"

"He is certainly very pleasant," said Love coolly. "But, please remember what I said to you about gushing. It is exceedingly vulgar."

"Well, I call that disagreeable, and ungrateful, too," said Hazel. "Not to want me to like him when he has been so kind and pleasant —and an author, too!"

"Are authors generally unkind and disagreeable, then?" asked Miss Gordon, laughing in spite of herself.

"They are, I imagine, either bending over backwards with pride if people like their writings, or cross and grumpy if they do not," opined Hazel wisely. "But I should never dream of his being an author at all. He is just perfect!"

"Hazel," said Miss Gordon, in a sort of desperation, "have you learned that history lesson perfectly?"

"I don't believe so—that is, not yet. It is so stupid and uninteresting I can't learn it. Mr. Lough told me he had a nice story which takes in that very period. I am going to get it after breakfast. He told me to come. You might come with me if you wanted to; his library is the most fascinating place you ever saw."

"You must not stop to look at anything," said Miss Gordon severely. "Mr. Lough is always busy in the morning. But, wait a minute; I want you to take a note to him for me."

"A note!" exclaimed Hazel inquiringly. "About what? He'll be coming over to-night. I shall remind him of—"

"No, you must not," and Miss Gordon's tone was peremptory. "He will think us very bold and pushing. He does not like to know people. Did n't you hear him say so?" The note she

presently penned and dispatched by the hand of her cousin brought a puzzled frown to John Lough's handsome brows when he read it. It was merely a very formal declination in her aunt's name of the offer of the carriage.

CHAPTER IX

HAZEL EXPLAINS

JOHN LOUGH'S story, as briefly related by Mrs. Sedgewick, was, in the main, correct. The only son of his mother, and to her the circle of the whole round world, he had grown up under her loving care in the most luxurious of homes. "It was a nest far too soft," he told himself at times, with a touch of bitterness, when, with the natural stirrings of young manhood, he longed to break away, if only for a time, from the silken cords which held him so unyieldingly. There were times when he would have been glad to be stripped of every token of wealth, that he might engage the world in a fierce wrestle for bare livelihood—that he might meet other men and measure him-

self against them on the firm level of hard work and strenuous endeavor. But his mother's sad eyes held him at her side, and when, after her death, he found himself his own master, the strain and stress of youthful ambition had somewhat slackened, and he had settled down contentedly enough to his pen. He had been writing fitfully for years, when, to his mother's immense delight and his own astonishment, he had somehow found himself the famous author of several small volumes of verse and prose.

He secretly regarded his own work as indifferent to a degree, and was just about to begin a task more arduous and of wider scope than any he had before attempted, when, as he himself put it in a sonnet hastily composed on the evening of the same day, "Spring knocked at his door." The vision of Love Gordon, with her breeze-blown hair, her fresh, young color, and her clear, asking eyes, had remained with him pretty constantly, sleeping and waking, since the delicious shock of its surprise.

And yet nothing was more remote from the imagination of this singular young man than thoughts of love commonly so called. The vision had unnumbered sister wraiths in the guise of heavenly sunsets, of fair, flower-decked forests, of tender, shimmering stretches of moonlit water. John Lough was a poet; hence he loved impartially everything that was beautiful and harmonious. Heretofore he had not included women in the category—simply because he had not known many of them. His mother occupied a throne quite by herself—already surrounded in memory by a saintly nimbus. The few specimens of tailor-made, conventional young ladies who had been presented to his notice had failed to appeal to his artistic sense. They were handsome, doubtless—like highly cultivated varieties of the rose or dahlia. But the gardener's art was too conspicuous. Their undeniable beauty was too suggestive of the forcing grounds and the pruning knife. Hence

the lamentable failure of his Newport visit, mentioned by Mrs. Sedgewick.

"I am immensely sorry I cannot gratify you by falling in love with one or all of these charming young women," he had said quite seriously to his hostess when she had frankly taken him to task in the matter. "I have no doubt it would be very agreeable as well as beneficial to my character; but I simply can't, you know."

Whereupon Mrs. de Forest had lectured him soundly on his general obduracy and hardness of heart. "I had quite set my heart on seeing John married to that lovely Dorothea Van Brunt," she told his mother. "She is simply a paragon of all the virtues, and of the most unexceptionable connections."

Mrs. Lough had listened with thoughtful attention to this and similar eulogies. It is probable that she did not regard any of the young women whom she met as the equal of her John. "My son seems satisfied with the society of his mother," she said ingenuously. "Why

should we endeavor to wean him from a life which seems to make him happy, and in which he is certainly doing a very great work in instructing and uplifting the world."

The good lady doubtless overrated her son's literary abilities with a quite pardonable maternal pride. But, as the event proved to her open satisfaction, the young man remained heart-whole to the day of her death. It might have been a slight pricking of conscience which, at the last, caused her to say to him: "I hope, dear John, that you will find someone to fill my place before long."

He had passionately assured her that this was impossible. By way of answer she smiled up into his face with a mixture of joy and sad prescience. Then, after a short silence, she spoke again—this time to herself—or to some unseen presence at her side: "He will find her. She is not far away, and I am glad; for he will be lonely, poor John!"

Curiously enough, these strange last words of

his mother's flashed back into his mind as he read Love Gordon's chilly little note. Hazel was watching his expressive face.

"Love was cross this morning," she said tentatively. "No—not cross exactly. She is never cross. She says it is the stupidest thing in the world to be cross. But sometimes she is *very* dignified, and then I have to be careful and not exaggerate or gush; for she simply crushes me in the politest way, and makes me feel about so big!" The little girl gravely measured off a minute bit of her rosy finger by way of illustration. "It is n't nice to gush, I know," she added, gazing with open admiration into the eyes which, she had said, were like deep, deep pools of still water; "but sometimes one can't help it, if they like anyone as much as I like you."

"I am very much obliged to you, Hazel," said John Lough. But his face was grave, and he glanced again in a puzzled way at the sheet of note-paper, which he still held in his hand.

"Well, I suppose I must go," said Hazel with a deep sigh. "Love said I must n't stay a minute, for you were always busy in the morning. She said something else, too—the queerest thing. I don't believe it, either. Shall I tell you what it was?"

He hesitated. "I don't suppose you ought to repeat what was not intended for me to hear," he said at last, with a little shake of his broad shoulders.

"She did n't say I should n't tell," said Hazel positively, "and I feel as though I must know. If I thought it was true I should be too unhappy!"

"If it is anything I can do— If you think—" he began, this time with shameless curiosity in his eyes.

"Well, I 'm going to say it right out. Love said you would think that we were very bold and pushing if I reminded you that you *almost* promised to come over this evening and tell us about the royal jelly and the queen. You did

almost promise, you know, and I have been just thinking of it and looking forward to it every single minute. She said that she would buy me a book about bees. Think of that!" The fine scorn with which the word 'book' was uttered was an excellent corrective for an author's lurking vanity, thought her attentive listener. What he said was prompt and to the point:

"I never thought of anything except that I had found some very delightful neighbors, and that perhaps I could see much of them—if they liked me as well as I liked them. I was glad—for I am lonely," he added, half-unconsciously quoting his mother's words.

"That 's just exactly what I thought!" said Hazel with a beatific look. "Love said you did n't want to know people; but we are n't just *people*. That sounds so—so—" She paused as if in search of a word.

"Inclusive," laughed John Lough. "Well, I am not sure that I do want to know 'people.' I ought to want to. It is a defect in my education

of which I am sadly aware. But I do want to know you, Hazel. And I assure you that I intend to sedulously cultivate your acquaintance, if I may?"

"It is what *I* want more than anything in the world!" Hazel assured him with the generous abandon of her years. "You will want to know Love, too," she added seriously. "She is really the most wonderful girl in the world! I could n't begin to tell you how lovely and sweet and good and clever and unselfish and cheerful and funny and— But, oh, how she would *look* at me if she could hear me; and I must go this very minute. Good-bye, John Lough. I may call you that, may n't I, if you call me Hazel. I like to say it; it sounds so square!"

She was gone like a flash, and John Lough stood in his door looking after her, with a curious smile on his lips. Then he went back to his study, glanced indifferently at the scattered sheets of manuscript which lay upon his desk, and finally searched for and found among a mass of

papers the unfinished sonnet entitled "When Spring Came to My Door." "It was far too cold and impersonal," he decided, and fell to amending the faulty lines, which he finished with a fine glow of inspiration.

In the beginning of the long spring twilight Hazel was gazing fondly at her bees, as the late comers promenaded up and down on the alighting board with a low, humming sound expressive of profound satisfaction with their day's labor when John Lough's tall figure emerged from behind the clustered evergreens. He closed the little gate behind him, and cast an inquiring glance toward the Sedgewick house. Hazel flew to meet him with a glad cry of welcome. "I 've been watching for you," she said. "I was so afraid you would turn around and get proper all of a sudden and disapprove of me when you came to think it over. People do that sometimes, and you never know when they are going to. Lovina Gordon is always doing it. Really, she likes to say things right out, just the way I do.

I know she does. And sometimes she just lets go of herself, and we have the jolliest old times. Then perhaps the very next day she 'll be as grown-up and proper! I have n't had a bit of fun with her to-day. But that 's because mother's nerves have been bad again. Love has to stay with her all the time when her nerves are bad; mother would n't have Collins, even if Collins had time; and she has n't a bit, because we 've no other maids. Collins is real cross sometimes. I heard her tell Patrick that he is an old goose to stay here. But you could n't get Patrick to leave Love any more than you could get the moon out of the sky. He simply worships the ground she walks on. He told Collins so right out."

"H'm," commented John Lough, with a thoughtful air. "Where is Miss Gordon this evening?"

"She is reading out loud to mother," said Hazel crossly "I tried to get her to come out. I said I would read out loud. But mother said

it made her nervous to see me fidget. She likes Love's voice, too; it makes her go to sleep after a while. Sometimes, though, it takes a long, long time; and sometimes Love gets up in the middle of the night and reads. I heard her for ever so long last night."

John Lough frowned. "Mrs. Sedgewick evidently needs a nurse," he said. "I don't think—" He stopped short and bit his lip as if cutting short some sentence which struggled for utterance.

"Don't be afraid to say just what you think to *me*," said Hazel comfortably. "I sha'n't repeat it." She had the grace to blush scarlet as soon as the words were out of her mouth. "Of course you will think I am a regular little tale-bearer after this morning," she went on hurriedly. "But I thought that was different. Don't you think it was?"

John Lough hastened to assure her that he fully appreciated her frankness. "In fact, it made me much more comfortable under what I

should have been disposed to regard as a downright snub," he added.

"Was it Love's note?—the snub, I mean," asked Hazel. "I thought she looked awesome when she was writing it. I did n't dare ask to read it."

"I wanted to send the carriage around this morning—and every morning, to take you all out for a drive," he explained. "I thought it would perhaps be good for your mother, and for—"

"And would n't she go?"

"Miss Gordon absolutely declined in your mother's name; but perhaps Mrs. Sedgewick is n't able to drive."

"It was only last week mother was moaning because she had n't any carriage," said Hazel. "Mother's nerves are so queer," she added mournfully. "She said it would make her think of other days to go in a carriage that was n't hers. Love wanted to hire one, though we really could n't afford it."

"Shall I tell you about the queen bee now?" said John Lough abruptly. He was still frowning, and he tugged at his short mustache in a way which his mother would have understood as betraying the deepest annoyance.

"Please, do," assented Hazel with enthusiasm. "How do you know there is a queen? Does she wear a crown, and has she ladies in waiting?"

"She has ladies in waiting, certainly," he said, his face clearing somewhat; "but not even Queen Wilhelmina wears her crown all the time. The queen is in reality the hive-mother; she is also the centre and ruler of her nation, which cannot thrive and work for long without their queen. And this is how that mysterious royal jelly comes into the bee story. You were proposing, I believe, to feed it to the aged and infirm workers in your bee-hospital."

"It sounds so rich and delicious," murmured Hazel.

"When by any mischance the queen is lost, as sometimes happens," he went on, "the bees

very soon find it out, and set about getting a new one. You might think perhaps that they would choose the wisest and most industrious bee in the hive for queen; but royalty must be born, not made, and the bees know that as well as any nation in Europe." He stopped short at sound of a heavy step on the turf. It was Collins, and she courtesied deep at sight of him.

"Asking your pardon, sir," said Collins, "Miss Hazel is wanted immediate by the madam. Mrs. Sedgewick 'ud not be knowing you was here, sir," she added majestically.

Hazel cast an imploring glance at the young man. "I forgot all about brushing mother's hair," she said in a low voice. "But she hardly ever wants it done so early. Oh, I do wish—"

"Some morning next week," he said kindly, as he looked down into the little girl's disappointed face; "I will show you a queen cradle—for unless I am greatly mistaken this great swarm will find its new quarters uncomfortably small. Good-night!"

Then this absurdly impressionable young man went away and tramped many miles under the shining of the May moon; and as he walked certain things which had appeared strange and past finding out in the years that were gone became on a sudden far clearer than the moonlight. There was also a wandering spirit of music abroad which sang about his ears persistently, till at last he went home and wrote down all the words that sprang unbidden to the white paper. And, behold, it was a second sonnet; and he called it "When Spring Came to my Heart!"

CHAPTER X

TWO MAIDS AND A QUEEN

"HAZEL, dear! Hazel, I want you." It was Love Gordon's soft voice that called.

By way of answer the little girl's rapid feet clattered across the bare boards of the attic chamber. "What is it, Love?" she asked in a muffled voice. "Don't tell me that it 's time for that horrid history lesson. I have n't learned a word of it yet."

"Why, what are you doing, child?" demanded Love, her brown eyes opening to their widest as she gained her cousin's side.

"I 'm making a bee hat for myself, and one for you," said Hazel, with evident pride. "They 're a new kind, and all my own idea,

too. I 've taken some of this wire netting that Patrick had to cover the screen doors with; and then, you see, I 've made a sort of round cage big enough to go over our heads. It 's awfully hard to cut the stuff, Love. Won't you help me? I 've got to stitch a round piece in the top next, and then—"

"Are n't those Aunt Margaret's embroidery scissors, Hazel?" asked Love Gordon, with evident disapproval.

"Well, I could n't find any others, dear Miss Prim; I was in such a dreadful hurry, you know," replied the culprit composedly. "Mother never embroiders nowadays; so it does n't signify in the least. But I wish you 'd find me a bigger pair; these hurt my fingers. Do, that 's a good girl! You see, Love, if another swarm should come out, I want to be able to fix them myself. I would n't have the face to ask John Lough after the crushing note you sent him this morning. I think it was horrid of you, too, when—"

"Did Mr. Lough tell you that it was a crushing note?" asked Miss Gordon, with dignity; "or did you merely assume as much? It was a perfectly proper and polite—"

"Oh, dear me, yes," interrupted Hazel, with a disrespectful shrug; "I don't doubt it was perfectly proper and polite and all that; but it made him feel too wretched for anything. I tell you, Love, John Lough is n't one bit the way you said."

"The way I said?" repeated the young lady, frowning a little. "And, my dear Hazel, why do you call him *John* Lough? You should n't speak of a stranger in that familiar fashion; it is very ill-bred."

"I don't think so," observed Hazel, with the serenity of conviction. "He calls me Hazel, for one thing; and for another, he is n't a stranger. He is one of my dearest friends. So there!"

Miss Gordon offered no comment on this surprising statement; and after a pause, filled with

strenuous efforts to sever the wire netting with the embroidery scissors, Hazel went on with a defiant toss of her short, curling locks: "It does n't take me forever to find a dearest friend, Lovina Gordon. *I* knew the very minute I laid eyes on John Lough that I should *always* like him, and I always shall. I shall try to make it up to him."

"Make what up to him?"

"Why, your—your meanness. Yes, I will say so. Why did n't you tell him you 'd be delighted to go driving in his carriage? He was just as disappointed as he could be; and you know mother wanted to—"

"Aunt Margaret told me to decline the invitation, Hazel. Now, really, my dear, I must ask you to drop the subject and come down and attend to your lessons at once."

When Miss Gordon chose to assume the tone and manner which she wore as she said these words, the younger girl generally wilted. "I am coming, Love," she said meekly. "But you

will help me finish these bee-hats after luncheon, won't you?"

"Yes, dear—if I am not too busy with Aunt Margaret's peignoir; she needs it, and I am so slow with my needle."

"You are n't meant to grub and sew all the while, that 's why," said Hazel, under her breath. In the depths of the despised history she murmured: "Yes, I shall make it up to John Lough—just as much as I possibly can."

Ten minutes later the decorous account of England's kings, queens and wars dropped to the floor with a loud thump, which caused Mrs. Sedgewick's half-closed eyes to open with a fretful exclamation. "Dear, dear, what a trying child Hazel is growing!" she said languidly. "I fear you are not going to be equal to the task of training her, Love. But where has the child gone, my dear? She ought never to be allowed to leave a room in that rude, abrupt manner."

The question was answered by Hazel herself,

who at that moment thrust her flushed face in at the open window long enough to ejaculate a single word: "Bees."

"Bees?" repeated Mrs. Sedgewick, with a displeased pucker of her delicate brows. "Really, I think I must order Patrick to throw them all away; I cannot endure these startling interruptions. You had best go and call the child, Love; and, stay—you may direct Collins to sit within sound of my bell for the next hour while you hear Hazel's lessons in the dining-room."

"I am afraid Collins is busy with the ironing, Aunt Margaret," said the girl hesitatingly; "and—"

"What does that signify, pray?" demanded Mrs. Sedgewick. "Collins' time and convenience are not her own, remember. She is my servant; though I fear she often forgets the fact. I fancy you are a very demoralizing factor in the house, as far as the servants are concerned, my dear. It will never do to allow them to forget their place."

Love Gordon's lips quivered for an instant; then she compressed them tightly. "I will tell Collins, Aunt Margaret," she said gently.

"I have to go after Miss Hazel, Collins," she was saying in the kitchen a moment later. "She has run away from her lessons after something or other. I know you are busy this afternoon; but if I open these two doors do you think you could hear Aunt Margaret's bell? And would you please—"

"I 'll do it for you, Miss Love," said Collins, setting down her flatiron with a decided clap. "But I hope to goodness that the madam will keep her bell quiet whilst you 're gone. As for Miss Hazel, she 's run after a swarm of bees; she must have seen 'em out the window. They was in full flight over the garden way, an' she 's took after 'em like a bird. I don't think you 'll catch either of 'em, if you ask me."

"I shall have to try," was Love's answer, as she snatched a broad-brimmed hat from the hall table and hastened away in chase of the fugi-

tives. She presently caught sight of a fragment of Hazel's pink cotton frock fluttering from a barbed-wire fence, and later heard an excited shout from the little girl.

"Come on, Love; they 've just dropped among these trees somewhere."

The little grove of slender, grey-bodied beeches seemed filled with a gentle humming sound. Love Gordon paused knee-deep in a tangle of fragrant young fern to listen.

"They 're here somewhere," repeated Hazel, staring up into the leafy wilderness above her head. "I saw them coming down. They were way up in the sky, whirling like a cyclone. I just know it 's one of John Lough's swarms; would n't I like to—" She stopped short with a loud exclamation of surprise and dismay.

"What—what is it?" stammered Love Gordon confusedly. The humming sound was growing louder; it filled her ears with a low, continuous roar like the sound of a waterfall. Myriads

of golden-brown specks danced dizzily before her eyes.

"Why—ee! Love, they—they're swarming on—your hat!" gasped Hazel. "Don't move—don't touch them—Oh!"

Love Gordon stood motionless, her face growing white under the broad brim of the hat, which began to droop heavily toward her shoulders under its burden of bees.

"Oh, Love, it's a splendid big swarm," breathed Hazel excitedly; "and they won't hurt you a bit because they're so busy thinking about their queen. She's right there on your hat, you know. If you'll only keep perfectly quiet, I'll run and get Patrick and a nail-keg. He's just got to let me have one this time. It won't take more than a minute or two to wash it out with molasses and water; then we'll come back and take your hat off. I do hope there isn't a hat-pin in it."

"Hazel—don't go!" begged Miss Gordon, her breath coming in short, hurried gasps. But the

little girl was already out of hearing. "Don't move, Love, till I come!" came floating back on the breeze; then she was left alone, dizzily erect in the tangle of fern. The pungent odor of honey and wax half stifled her; the weight and heat of the great swarm threatened to crush her to the earth. "If I should fall down," she thought, "it would disturb them and they would be angry. Somewhere she had read of men and animals perishing under the assaults of furious bees. Then she almost laughed aloud as she fancied what an odd sight she must present in her curiously decorated hat. During what seemed an interminable age the girl stood rigidly erect in the hot sunshine; now and then clusters of bees dropped from the weighted hat-brim and crawled aimlessly about her thinly-clad shoulders. Everything was beginning to waver huge and misshapen before the wide brown eyes. "It is only a bad dream, after all," she told herself. "I shall wake up presently and—"

On a sudden, surrounding objects resumed

their familiar outlines once more; someone was speaking to her in a voice which brought back the color with a rush to her white cheeks.

"Shut your eyes for just a moment, Miss Gordon," said the quiet voice; "I want to puff a little smoke among these trespassers, then we 'll relieve you of your singular hat trimming."

"You 're a regular darling, Lovina Gordon," cried Hazel from somewhere in the rear, "to stand so still and not scare the swarm. Was n't I glad, though, to meet John Lough coming, with a smoker and everything! Myers had been watching the swarm with a glass all the time, and saw it settle on your hat. I wish it had been *my* hat! But everything always happens to you, Love, because your 're a regular fairy princess, and—"

John Lough had been working as he never worked before; he lifted the hat with its living burden from the young girl's head, handed it to the waiting Myers, hastily brushed the clinging bees from the round, white neck and shoulders,

then, as the slender figure wavered helplessly, he caught it in his arms and strode away from the neighborhood of the hive. "Fetch some water, quick!" he ordered Hazel; "your cousin has fainted."

"Fainted? Lovina Gordon fainted! Why in the world did she do that?" queried Hazel aghast, as she dashed the watery contents of her hat, recklessly filled in a neighboring brook, into the white face which lay against the rough tweed coat. "We 've got lots of fainting medicines at the house, John Lough; shall I run and get them, and sha'n't I call Collins, too?"

"Yes—yes, do something—quick," he answered almost roughly. But as he said the words the brown eyes opened and the quick color flashed back into the sweet face.

"I—I am quite well now," said Miss Gordon rather tremulously. "But"—drawing herself up with more than her usual dignity—"I am really ashamed of myself, Mr. Lough. It must have been the heat, I think, and—"

Wings and Fetters—3.

"'FETCH SOME WATER, QUICK!' HE ORDERED HAZEL"

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"It was a frightful ordeal," he said, looking down at her anxiously. "It seemed an age before we could reach you. Do you feel able to walk now, or shall I call Patrick? Together we could carry you home very easily."

"What could you carry her on?" demanded Hazel. "It 's always a shutter in story-books. Would n't that be funny, Love, to be carried home on a shutter? But I fancy mother would—"

"I am perfectly able to walk, thank you," declared Miss Gordon. "I hope you did n't tell Aunt Margaret about the bees, Hazel. It would annoy her terribly."

"I did n't go home," said Hazel. "I met them coming with the hive. Are n't you glad we got that swarm for you, John Lough?"

"That swarm belongs to Miss Gordon," he said promptly. "She captured it literally and metaphorically."

"That would be a regularly splendid pun," observed Hazel approvingly, "if she had only

been wearing a cap; but you could n't call that old garden hat a cap. Was n't it lucky that I lost the hatpin out of it yesterday? If you 'd had a hatpin stuck through it into your hair, Lovina Gordon, I don't think they could have gotten the swarm without—well, I won't say what was on the tip of my tongue to say; but it reminded me somehow of Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots. You remember the way Elizabeth took to make sure of her swarm, Love?" The little girl's eyes were very bright and she skipped excitedly about as she talked. "I was just studying the part where Elizabeth had decided to shut that lovely Mary up in prison when I looked out of the window and saw the swarm whirling past. After this Elizabeth will always remind me of a queen bee killing all the other queens so she can rule alone."

Love Gordon passed her hand confusedly across her eyes; she had grown very pale again. "You will find your books in the dining-room, Hazel," she said gently. "Please go there

at once and study quietly till I can come to you."

Hazel glanced up to meet the disapproving eyes of the bee-master fixed full upon her. She hung her head, while a deep flush spread over her brown cheeks. "Yes, Love," she said meekly. "But I 'll tell you one thing, John Lough, I don't mean to look out of the window again, not even if a hundred of your swarms go by and are lost!"

"I am afraid you will think us very—very—interfering," faltered Miss Gordon, "and exceedingly unconventional as well. I—" She stopped short, as her self-control threatened to desert her altogether.

"I only hope you can forgive me, Miss Gordon, for the escapade of my runaway queen," he said. "Let me urge you to take some rest at once." Then he strode hastily away, feeling vaguely sore and indignant with himself in particular and with the world at large.

As for Love Gordon, she went straight to her

own room and buried her face in a cool, soft pillow for the space of half an hour. Pillows tell no tales.

CHAPTER XI

A BEE IN HER BONNET

"HONEY!" exclaimed Hazel, as she seated herself at the breakfast-table the next morning. "Where did it come from, Collins? Did my bees make it?"

Collins set down the coffee-urn before her young mistress with deliberation before she made answer. "It was brought this morning by a very respectable serving-man," she said majestically. "It is for Miss Love, and here 's the card as came with it."

Love glanced at the slip of pasteboard with a smile. It bore the words: "With humble apologies from the queen bee."

"He ought to have sent it to me, I think," pouted Hazel. Then she burst into one of her

elfin laughs. "Oh, I wish you could have seen yourself, Love! Do you know that hat was positively becoming?—the bees are such a pretty brown and they sparkled like spangled gauze in the sun. Some of them trailed off the back like a veil all bunched up, and some stood up in front like pompons. I don't see, though, why you fainted when they were taken off."

"Neither do I," said Miss Gordon lightly. "It was exceedingly foolish of me."

"And to think we have two hives already," went on Hazel, tasting the honey with a rapturous smile. "We shall have lots of honey of our own this fall; Patrick says so. I think he is too generous and splendid for anything."

"I think so, too," assented Miss Gorden with a sigh. "We could never get along without him in the world."

"Well, I 'm glad you 're coming to your senses, Lovina Gordon. That 's exactly what I think. And I don't believe we half know how good he is yet."

"I don't suppose we do, dear."

"But we shall know him better and better. I hope he 'll come over to-day ; don't you ?"

Miss Gordon looked mystified. "Patrick is right outside in the shrubbery now," she said. "I am going to talk with him about the young vegetables after breakfast. He has a chance to sell them all to a market-gardener, who will come after them every day."

"Patrick !" cried Hazel. "Did you suppose I was talking about Patrick? I meant John Lough."

Miss Gordon raised her brows warningly ; but the little girl was tripping to the door with her saucer of honey. "I 'm going to sacrifice my honey to those dear bees," she announced gravely. "It 'll encourage them now they 've just come here to live to find that I love them enough to give up my honey for them to eat. It 's such awfully hard work to get it out of the flowers; you 've no idea, Love."

She came back presently with a smiling face.

"They 're just delighted," she exclaimed. "I put the saucer on top of one of the hives, and it was n't more than a minute before one of the bees found it. I guess he took some of it inside and gave it to the queen, and she liked it and sent for some more, for lots of them came then. Don't you think I 'd better put the whole of this out for them to eat, Love? It seems positively greedy for us to gobble up in great mouthfuls what it takes them days to gather. Don't you think it does, Love?"

"I think they enjoy it," said Miss Gordon—"the work I mean, especially when there are plenty of flowers. I want some of this for Aunt Margaret, and for Patrick and Collins, too."

"Well, as long as it 's your honey, I suppose I can't object; but I 'm sure the bees would appreciate the sacrifice."

They did. This much was evident before many hours had passed. Hazel was quite astonished at the fervor of the demonstrations which took place about the saucer of honey. The bees

fairly tumbled over one another in their eagerness; the usual orderly going and coming of the workers seemed entirely suspended in order to do honor to the sacrifice, which seemed absurdly inadequate to the little girl. She stole quietly indoors and abstracted another fragment of the white comb. This she placed on the grass near the hives. "They 'll be so pleased," she was saying to herself, when to her grief and astonishment a bee flew angrily in her face and stung her on the forehead.

"It was an accident, of course," she explained to Collins in the kitchen, where she went in search of some soda to plaster on the rapidly swelling lump. "They would n't sting me on purpose, because I 've been so kind to them."

"Bees ain't no respecters of persons, said Collins piously. "They 're something like Providence that a-way. You can't never tell what 's a-goin' to happen when they 're around." The excellent woman hummed a bar of a hymn-tune as she rapidly stirred a pan of clear starch.

"It looks kind of like a shower," she added as she plunged a mass of white drapery into the translucent mixture. "I hope I can get your ma's white wrappers dried before it rains. I want to iron 'em this aft'noon."

"I thought you ironed all day yesterday, Collins," said Hazel in an aggrieved voice. "I want some ice-cream dreadfully, and mother said I might tell you to make some."

Collins' ruddy face darkened ominously. "I guess you 'll have to take it out a-wantin' this day, Miss Hazel," she said stiffly. There 's a rice pudding all made. I 'd no notion of doin' any more washin' this week; but along comes Miss Love with her arms full, an' says *she 's* a-goin' to wash 'em—she 'd spilled camphire or somethin' of the like on 'em when they was spankin' fresh, an' of course they would n't do for the madam after that."

"I don't think you ought to speak that way about mother, Collins," said Hazel, with dignity. "You never used to when we were rich."

Collins made no reply, but the aspect of her broad back as she tied on a gingham sunbonnet preparatory to carrying the freshly starched garments to the clothes-line was not reassuring.

"I 'm gettin' mighty sick an' tired of this 'ere whole experiment," said Collins to herself, as she pinned the mass of starchy muslin and lace to the line. "I 'd a sight druther go as a missionary to the heathen, an' I tol' Patrick Miles so las' night fair an' square. 'Here we be,' I says, 'workin' for no wages at all,' I says, 'an' harder 'an iver I thought to work in my life. An' our old age a-comin' on,' I says, 'an' no more 'preciation showed by the madam,' I says, 'an as if we was heathen Chinese. Which I ain't,' I says, 'even if you be.'"

The troubled current of Mrs. Miles' soliloquy was rudely interrupted at this point by a sudden flash and buzz.

Her subsequent course of action was viewed with interest by Hazel, who stood idly by the kitchen window, a discontented pout on her

scarlet lips. "I think Collins is getting to be too disagreeable to live," Hazel was saying to herself crossly. "That 's one of the dreadful things about being poor; one seems obliged to allow the servants to be impertinent—though I can't think why. Love is always lecturing me lately about being polite and considerate to Collins. I am sure I never thought of such a thing when—. But what can be the matter with her? She must be going crazy!"

There seemed ample ground for this suspicion, in view of the astonishing gyrations in which Mrs. Miles was indulging in the clothes-yard. She tore off the gingham bonnet with a wild gesture, cast it violently upon the ground and stamped on it with vicious emphasis. Then, as if this process had failed to relieve her overcharged feelings, she began to snatch at the hairpins which confined the severely classic knot in which she was wont to coil her not too abundant tresses. In this plight she charged violently into the kitchen.

"Take it out!" she screamed; "take it out, I say! The nasty little varmint 's a-bitin' of me in the 'ead!"

"Is it a bee?" asked Hazel, eyeing the irate Collins from a safe distance.

By way of answer Collins sank groaning into the nearest chair. "I guess it 's gone now," she gasped feebly. "Oh, my 'ead, my 'ead!"

"It *was* a bee—poor, dear little fellow!" exclaimed Hazel indignantly. "And you 've gone and crushed his sweet little gauzy wings with your big, clumsy hands; and now he 'll have to die, and never, never fly off happy in the morning after flow—"

"An' is it the imper'ant little varmint as flew in my bonnet 'at you 're talkin' 'bout?" demanded Collins, rising majestic, while tears of pain and rage overflowed her blue eyes. "An' it 's my big, clumsy 'ands indeed, is it? Please God, there 'ere big, clumsy 'ands 'll do no more work in this 'ateful 'ouse. I 've 'ad enough, that I 'ave!" With this Mrs. Miles swept out of the

kitchen, her auburn locks streaming wildly about her shoulders.

Hazel stood for a full minute listening to the grenadier-like tread which echoed down the passageway, then she glanced about the kitchen with a toss of her naughty head. "I 'm glad of it," she said aloud, "just as glad as I can be. I can make candy whenever I like now, and ice-cream, too; 't is n't a bit hard to do it. I shall have some this very day." She resolved to give the dead bee handsome burial before beginning these interesting culinary operations, and was intent on selecting a suitable shroud for the tiny crushed form from a border of velvety pansies, when Love's voice called her from the side piazza.

"Do you know where Collins is, Hazel?" asked Miss Gordon anxiously. "It is time for Aunt Margaret's luncheon, and the kitchen fire has gone out. I don't see Collins anywhere about."

"I suppose she 's gone by this time," said Hazel coolly.

"Gone?"

"Yes, *gone;* and I 'm glad of it; you ought to be, too. She 's been getting crosser and crosser every day since we came here. I guess Collins does n't like the country—and especially bees." Despite her role of coroner, chief mourner and undertaker, the little girl giggled at the remembrance of the scene in the backyard. "I was too vexed to laugh at first," she added with an explanatory air, "but it was as funny as could be."

"What was funny? Tell me this minute," said Miss Gordon, driven to sternness by a rapidly gathering cloud of apprehension.

"Why, to see Collins dancing on her sunbonnet, and pulling out hairpins with both hands and throwing them all over the yard. I just know you 'd have laughed if you could have seen her. But I was too provoked at first because she killed the bee—poor, dear little thing. He did n't mean to sting. I told Collins what I thought of her cruelty, and she was furious, and marched

off to get her things, I suppose. I don't care, anyway; she 's too disobliging for anything. She said she would n't make ice-cream when mother said I might order it, and—"

"Oh, Hazel, you did n't ask Collins to make ice-cream to-day?"

"Yes, I did," said Hazel defiantly; "why should n't I? Mother says you spoil the servants, and I think so, too. When I grow up and have maids, I shall never allow—"

But Miss Gordon was gone. "Hurrying as if she had a bee in her bonnet, too," muttered naughty Hazel, staring after her cousin with some astonishment. There were plenty of excited bees ready to fly madly into bonnets or curls, as Hazel discovered just as she was in the act of laying the dead bee in a tiny grave under the rose-bush.

"They act as if they felt real cross about something," murmured the little girl, after she had succeeded in shaking the intruder free. A moment later she was glad to run as fast as her

feet could carry her before the determined attacks of half a dozen of the infuriated Amazons. This flight carried her almost into the arms of John Lough, who was walking meditatively under the shadowy trees on his own lawn.

"What is the matter, Hazel?" asked the poet, with an amused twinkle in his grey eyes. "Are you training for a race with runaway swarms?"

"I 'm running away from some of my bees," said the child, fanning her hot face with the skirt of her ruffled pinafore. "I 've got a sting now, and I don't want another."

"I should say not," said John Lough, examining the purple lump under the curling love-locks. "You must put a little honey on this, and keep away from the hives for a few hours. Your friends are evidently vexed about something."

"They ought not to be," said Hazel with feeling. "I gave them every bit of my share of that delicious honey you sent Love, when I

wanted it dreadfully myself. I 'm so fond of honey."

"You gave them honey?"

"I wanted them to feel at home," explained Hazel, "and to see that I loved them. It 's such hard work to get honey, you know; I could n't be so greedy as to eat it all myself. And the bees were just delighted at first; but afterward one stung me, and another flew into Collins' bonnet and stung her. That was too funny; I wish you could have seen her. You would have laughed, I know, because your eyes are always shiney when there's anything the least bit funny; I 've noticed it. But Love did n't even smile when I told her. Sometimes, do you know, I think Lovina Gordon is lacking in a sense of humor?" The last words were evidently a quotation. The little girl pronounced them with an evident relish, which caused the grey eyes of her listener to assume the "shiney" look of which she had spoken so appreciatively.

"What were the net results to Collins?"

he asked quite soberly. "Did the bee sting her?"

"I 'm sure I hope so," replied Hazel unfeelingly. "She crushed the poor little thing to death. I 've just been having the funeral. Collins said she was going to leave. I guess she has gone by this time. Love could n't find her anywhere, and the kitchen fire is out; Love said so. I 'm going to have lots of fun now that Collins has gone. I shall make chocolate fudge every morning, and ice-cream every afternoon. Do you like fudge?"

"H'm, I fancy so," replied John Lough absent-mindedly. "I 'm afraid you 've done a lot of mischief, child," he added, wrinkling his fine forehead. "I 'm not much of a housekeeper, to be sure; but that last sounds alarmingly dubious."

"I don't think it does at all," retorted Hazel indignantly. "I can make delicious fudge; and I can easily learn ice-cream. One ought to learn something new every single day," she

went on, with gathering severity of tone and mien. "I must say I 'm surprised at you, John Lough. Don't you want me to improve?"

"Indeed, I do," he said feelingly. "I 'll just add one fact to your stock of useful knowledge now: never leave a scrap of honey near your hives. It completely demoralizes the bees—turns them into winged furies, you know."

"I can't see why, when they make it themselves," said Hazel. "And they *were* glad—I am sure they were glad."

"No doubt," he returned coolly. "They were as glad as a gang of sober, industrious, Italian laborers would be if I should suddenly set down a barrel of gold dollars in their midst. Every one of those laborers would be engaged in honestly earning one of those coins for himself; but the whole gang would instantly throw down their picks and shovels and hurl themselves on the barrel. And in less time than it takes to tell it we should have a howling mob of infuriated demons, ready to tear one another's eyes out and

to do battle with any intruder who happened that way."

"Is that what happened to my bees when I gave them the honey-comb?"

"Precisely. They are probably plundering each other's hives by this time."

"Dear, dear!" ejaculated Hazel mournfully. "I suppose they 'll ruin everything. Is n't there anything to do?—to make them stop, I mean."

"Oh, they 'll cool off after a bit," he said reassuringly. "I wish I was as sure about Collins," he added, half to himself.

"You would n't think of saying that if you knew her as I do," observed Hazel. "She 's crosser than a whole hive of bees when she gets started. I should hate to have to get up and get breakfast, though, and I 'm sure I don't know what Patrick will say."

At that very minute Patrick was standing in the door of the Sedgewick kitchen. His better half, wearing her awe-inspiring Sunday bonnet and clutching the handle of a satchel, sat in a

wooden-bottomed chair coldly surveying the disorder about her. "You 're my lawful wedded wife, that 's what you be, Eliza Collins," Mr. Miles was saying forcefully, if ungrammatically; "an' that you can't get around, try as you may. You promised solemn, out of the prayer-book, to love, honor and—obey—me, Patrick Miles; an' I don't want you should forget it! I tell you to go an' take off your bonnet this minute an' get luncheon ready for the young ladies. Do you hear me, Eliza Collins?"

"I ain't deef, Patrick Miles," observed the lady caustically.

The old butler approached his wrinkled face to the rosy cheek of Mrs. Miles. "Eliza," he whispered, almost tearfully, "you can't get around the prayer-book nohow—you know you can't; you 've got to obey me; but, for goodness' sake, Eliza, don't make it any harder for me than you have to!"

The astute Mr. Miles planted a resounding kiss in the middle of the hard, pink cheek as he

spoke these ingratiating words. Whereat Mrs. Miles arose majestically.

"You are an idjit, Miles, sure," she remarked enigmatically. "Mind you, it 's the prayer-book I'm obeying, not *you*." With that she withdrew to reappear shortly clad in her usual rustling armor of purple gingham.

Luncheon was late that day, but its superior quality was noted by Hazel with satisfaction. "I think it does Collins good to get a bee in her hair," she observed pleasantly. "I 'm going to tell her so after lunch."

CHAPTER XII

WINGS

TO Love Gordon, pursuing the even tenor of her ways, there came no hint as yet of the singular experiences which were befalling her neighbor. The spring, merging rapidly into the glory of young summer, was all about her, yet it seemed as though stolen glimpses of its sweetness were all that fell to her lot. Poor Mrs. Sedgewick had fallen into a lamentably low state of mind, which revealed itself with increasing insistance in her frail body. She complained that she had been buried alive in the old house; that the perpetual soughing of the wind through the great trees gave her nervous chills; that the odor of the spring flowers reminded her of funerals; and, worse

than all, she insisted that there must be new servants about the place and more of them. "It was impossible," she declared—after having reviewed for the hundredth time her manifold misfortunes—"to keep up the place with only two worn-out servants. Patrick was too old to work about the grounds as he was doing, and Collins was insufferably familiar and impertinent."

In vain Love brought all her powers of logic and persuasion to bear. "Without Patrick and Collins we could not stay here at all, Aunt Margaret," she said beseechingly. "Don't you understand that we could not afford it?"

"I am sure I told you that before we came," cried Mrs. Sedgewick, with a feeble air of triumph. "We certainly can not afford to stay here just to make a home for these ungrateful creatures. It would be much better for us to go abroad. To think how kind your poor uncle was to them for years and years, and yet, when I ordered Collins to make a plain Nesselrode pudding for dessert yesterday, she was positively

insulting. She said she had n't time. Think of that—to me!"

"But, dear Aunt Margaret," persisted Miss Gordon, "you know Collins has so many things to attend to—the laundry work and sweeping and—"

"That is exactly what I am telling you," broke in Mrs. Sedgewick. "We must either break up this forlorn housekeeping, or we must employ more competent servants. And Collins must go. I shall insist upon that."

And when Collins herself, her blue eyes shining with wrath, called poor Love into the kitchen to unburden herself of her bottled-up emotions, the girl listened unprotesting, her hands folded wearily in her lap.

"If it was just you an' Miss Hazel, I 'd be gettin' along fine, an' you 'd be never hearin' a word out of me mouth," said Collins tearfully. "But it 's Nesselrode puddin' for dessert, an' omelette souflée for lunch, an' six ruffled petticoats waitin' to be ironed, an' a pile of linen as

high as the table, an' only one pair of han's to do it all."

"I could help with the ironing, Collins," said Miss Gordon, sighing a little as she glanced down at her delicate hands already somewhat roughened by unaccustomed tasks. "If I should get up a little earlier, and—"

"An' 'deed, an' you 'll not be doin' anything of the kind, Miss Love," interrupted Collins, with a fine show of indignation. "You 're doin' far too much now, an' ivery day of the world, when it 's out enjoyin' yerself you should be. You was n't brought up to be a nurse, nor yet a lady's maid, miss."

"Hush, Collins," said Miss Gordon authoritatively, "you must not speak that way. I am only doing what is right and what I must do." The girl turned a little sadly as if to leave the room.

"Could you be doin' a favor for me this afternoon, Miss Love?" asked Collins with profuse and ingratiating smiles. "It 's ivery day of the

week that grocery boy forgets something; an' to-day of all things if it was n't the yeast-cake. You could carry it in your shopping-bag, miss, an' no one 'll be the wiser for it. I 'll answer the madam's bell while you 're gone."

She watched the slim figure in its blue and white gown with undisguised satisfaction as the girl walked briskly away in the delicious air. "She 'll be findin' a fine husband some day, please God," she murmured piously as she flew about her kitchen with renewed energy.

It seemed to Love Gordon that the sky was never so deliciously blue, nor the drifting clouds so warmly white, the trees so fresh in all the bravery of their new foliage, and the common roadside flowers so exquisite. She stooped and gathered a handful of fragrant red clover blooms, whereat a riotous bumblebee rose into the bright air with a mellow, booming note of protest. The girl laughed aloud with the pure joy of living. All the cares and perplexities which seemed to weigh so heavily upon her slender shoulders

slipped off for the nonce and were not. It was enough to be out and away in the June weather, even if one's errand led one only as far as the dingy grocery in the dingier town at the water's edge.

She chose the long way home. It led her along a picturesque old street, bordered with quaint, tumble-down houses, their weather-beaten gables half smothered in honeysuckle and roses, their front yards choked with overgrown lilacs and syringas. She walked slowly, the serenity of the perfect day reflecting itself in her eyes. She was remembering a little homily once spoken by the man who was the only father she had ever known. "Never be afraid of what seems about to happen, child," he had said to her; "there is nothing we need fear but our own fears. The skies of our future may change as suddenly as the weather."

She had been "afraid" that very day, she told herself; but somehow the formless fears that crowded her near horizon seemed to have

vanished under the blue June heavens. "If Aunt Margaret would only come outdoors," she murmured aloud.

Then she paused and hesitated, as if half inclined to turn a nearby corner into a street which would lead her quite away from home. And all because she had recognized the tall figure swinging leisurely toward her.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Gordon," said John Lough by way of greeting, glancing with what the girl mistook for an expression of amusement at her flushed face. "Is n't this a glorious day? But why are you walking so fast? Have the bees swarmed again, or is Miss Hazel waiting with a history lesson?"

Love replied, truthfully enough, that she had been doing an errand for Collins, and had loitered by the way. "I just remembered that I must hurry home for reasons too numerous to mention—as Patrick says when he has n't exactly arranged all his whys and wherefore," she added, laughing.

"Did you suddenly remember all of those reasons when you saw me?" he asked, bending his tall head to catch the sparkle in the brown eyes under the drooping hat-brim. "Because if you did, I will go away directly."

Miss Gordon protested politely. "I have so many things to do," she said with an unconscious little sigh. "I am quite the man of the house, you know."

"Yes, I know," he said gravely, his eyes still busy with her face. What he saw there forced the next words from his lips almost against his will. "I wish I could do something to help," he said in a low voice. "It seems so selfish for me to be leading the easy, almost idle life that I do, while you—"

He broke off suddenly, and squared his broad shoulders with an impatient shrug of protest against the world's unyielding conventionalities. "Why, in Heaven's name," he demanded almost roughly, "should I not say to you what is in my heart to say? I wish to be your friend; I

wish to do something to make your life easier. Do you not understand? Why should we not help one another in this world? Why should I not be able to say to you, Here am I—a strong man with more of everything than I know what to do with, while you, a delicate girl, are struggling under burdens too heavy for you? Let me take and carry some of them for you. The world says that I may pay a polite visit, or I may send a paltry basket of fruit or flowers! I can do nothing more. But what is the world to you and me? I should be able to offer you a friendship that is worthy the word, and you should be able to accept it as fearlessly. It is all wrong—this conventionality. We must get down to the realities of living and helping one another in the old primal fashion."

He seemed talking more to himself than to her, and Love watched him, half frightened, yet half understanding his meaning. "Would he offer her his purse?" she wondered, and stiffened slightly at the thought.

He perceived the involuntary lifting of the small head and laughed angrily. "They have done their best to spoil you, child," he said abruptly; "but, thank God, they have n't succeeded! I shall not say what I wish I might because I have not forgotten that we are living in a century when it is well-bred and quite the thing to rescue a lady from drowning, but unconventional and quite impossible to keep her from working herself to death."

The girl looked squarely into his eyes. "Do I look as if I were working myself to death?" she said, with a spice of malice in her tones. "Or were you referring to some other unhappy person of your acquaintance?"

He met her gaze masterfully. "I meant you," he said softly.

They walked along in silence for several minutes. He seemed lost in reverie and quite unaware of the fact that his companion had quickened her steps, and that her face was deeply flushed and very sober. The girl's mind was in a tumult;

her thoughts flew hither and yon like flocks of startled birds. Of one thing only she was distinctly sure and that was that she was very happy. She was also dimly aware that back of this unreasoning happiness waited a host of teasing doubts and questions which would descend upon her without mercy once she was away from the strong, protecting presence at her side.

They had reached the winding drive and were walking under the shadows of the old trees. He looked down at her once more. Why Love—Love!" he exclaimed; "why did you not tell me I was walking too fast? I was thinking, child, such delightful thoughts, and they carried me away like wings. I may be your friend; may I not, Love?"

How she would have answered him he never knew, for a flying little figure in a pink gown hurled itself precipitately upon her. "Oh, Lovina Gordon, I thought you would never come! And how splendid that you are here, too, John Lough! I have been looking everywhere for

you both. My bees have swarmed and Patrick is playing on them with the hose; and Collins is crying in the kitchen because mother has given her warning; and oh, Lovina Gordon, what *shall* we do?"

The young lady's face was a study. Involuntarily she glanced up at her new-found friend. He saw and answered the appeal in the innocent eyes. "We 'll attend to the bees first," he said promptly. "Collins won't swarm yet awhile."

Hazel was deep in some sort of mental calculation. "We shall want another hive," she said at last. "Patrick says I sha n't have a nail-keg; I wanted one. And I wanted some molasses to wash it out with; but Collins is crosser than a whole bundle of kindling-wood, and I did n't dare go near the kitchen. How much do hives cost, John Lough?"

"About a dollar and seventy-five cents," he replied, with an air of shrewdness. "But I 'll tell you what I 'll do, I 'll trade the hive for queen cells. I want some for scientific investiga-

tions, and they are hard to get in a well managed hive."

"Is n't my hive well managed?" demanded Hazel. "What ought I to do that I have n't done?"

"I can't tell till we 've looked into it," he said gravely. "Will you put on a bee-veil and assist in the ceremony?"

"Of course I will!" cried Hazel. "I want to do it all myself. Oh, how good you are and how much I like you, John Lough!"

"That 's unconventional and as it should be," he murmured in his companion's ear, as the child darted away. "When will you say that to me, Love?"

The girl opened her lips as if to reply. "Don't tell me that I have n't any right to call you that," he went on, hurriedly. "I know we have n't known each other long; but we shall, and it is such a beautiful name—it is so like you. I have thought of you that way from the first."

"They 're there yet!" announced Hazel, dash-

ing back like a small whirlwind in petticoats. "But it does seem to me that you are taking such a time to walk up the hill. Your cheeks are as red as they can be, Lovina Gordon, and you look—why, you look as if you were going to cry, or something! Have you been being dignified and disagreeable to John Lough? For you can be, you darling, you know you can. Has she, John Lough?"

"Not a bit," he said cheerfully. "But I walked too fast, and talked too fast perhaps."

"I wish I 'd been there to hear," said Hazel, eyeing him with rapturous affection. "I like to hear what you say!"

CHAPTER XIII

A MONTH'S WARNING

THE bees were patiently waiting for their scouts to make arrangements for a new residence. They hung in a great pendulous cluster from the drooping boughs of a small evergreen tree near the hive. Patrick stood at a respectful distance, bringing the fine spray from his hose to bear upon the tree, his face wearing a troubled, preoccupied expression, which found vent in an occasional deep sigh. Sounds of belicose activity issued from the near-by kitchen windows.

"It 's Collins," whispered Hazel confidentially to John Lough. "She always sets things down hard when she 's mad. I guess Patrick is more

afraid of her than he is of the bees; I know I am."

Love Gordon had disappeared within doors. The young man could hear her gentle tones, and the loud, wrathful voice of the offended kitchen majesty as she made answer. He shook his head dubiously. "Patrick is a wise man," he murmured. Then to the old man himself: "You have treed a fine swarm there, Patrick."

"Yes, sir," said Patrick lugubriously. "Miss Hazel is a great bee-keeper. She caught thim at it, sir, just as they was comin' out of the hive. They 'd ha' been far an' away a fine day like this; but she was too smart for thim, sir."

"Is the queen there? Can I see her?" asked the little girl, delightedly surveying the golden-brown ball, which filled the air with its low, anxious humming.

"The queen is there certainly, in the very heart of her nation, but I don't know whether we shall see her to-day or not. Perhaps we may find the young queen in the other hive."

"The young queen?" repeated Hazel wonderingly.

"It is the old, experienced queen who leads out the young bees from the parent hive," he replied; "the young queen stays behind with the grown-up workers. They divide their stock of wisdom, you see."

He was working busily as he spoke, and now summoned Hazel, well protected by veil and gloves, to assist in making the new hive ready for occupancy. "We must move the first hive a little to one side of its old position," he explained, "so that the workers who are out in the field will come into the new hive and help to make the swarm as strong as possible."

"But what will the young queen do if she is left all alone?" asked Hazel.

"She won't be left alone." He was lifting the cover from the old hive as he spoke. "See, there are plenty of workers here. But it is just as I thought: here are one, two, three, four—unopened queen-cells!"

"Are those funny, thimble-shaped things queen-cells? What are queen-cells, anyway?"

"They are the queen-cradles or nurseries, of which I commenced to tell you the other evening. When the bees want a new queen, they select one or more cells containing young worker larvæ and greatly enlarge them—as you see. Then they begin to supply the inmate with that mysterious royal jelly. It is called royal jelly because a common larva fed exclusively upon it develops into a queen. Just what it is made of, and why this happens, our wisest students can only guess."

"Did anyone ever taste it?" inquired Hazel.

"Yes, I did once," he replied. "It has a very rich and curious flavor, something between cream, quince jelly and honey, slightly sour, and—well, I don't think you would care to eat much of it; it is only meant for royal princesses like these that you see sealed up in their cradles."

"What are they doing in there?" asked the little girl curiously.

"Really, I don't know," he said, shaking his head gravely. "We are peering about the door of one of nature's most closely-guarded secrets. I have opened these cells at every stage after they were sealed till they were ready to be hatched, and first I saw just a common larva—like this one, perhaps a little larger and plumper. After two or three days a head began to develop; later one can distinguish some legs carefully folded up, and at the very last a pair of filmy wings appear as if by magic. These princesses are pale and motionless as the dead at this stage, but they are really very much alive. A clever bee-keeper once put some glass cells over the royal larvæ; the bees sealed them up as usual. And so he was able to see all that there was to see. But you must remember, child, that we only see the outside of things; what we cannot see is the wonderful, invisible cause back of it all. If it were possible to lift off the top of my

head while I am talking to you, you might look at the convolutions of my brain, and observe the changes that are going on there; but how much of the real thinking could you see?"

"Do you mean," said Hazel, her dark eyes dilating with wonder, "that the *thinking* is going on back of everything that we see? *Who* is thinking? I know," she added, in a half-whisper. "It must be—God."

The two were silent before the amazing force of this thought. No new one indeed to John Lough, but one of ever increasing wonder and solemn joy.

The silence was broken by an eager whisper from Hazel. "Is that the queen?" She was pointing to a bee much larger than the others, which was moving slowly over the exposed comb, her long, elegant body a clear golden-brown color.

"Yes, that is certainly the queen!" He lifted her gently and placed her in Hazel's outstretched hand. "Even if you wore no glove she would

not sting you," he said. "The queens are furnished with stings, to be sure, and use them, too, but only on rival queens. Yet our royal lady will sometimes bite quite savagely, if frightened or roughly handled."

Hazel allowed the stately queen to escape onto the comb, where she was received with manifest joy by the workers.

John Lough was working rapidly now. He lifted three or four of the brood frames from the old hive, carefully brushed off the clinging bees, then replaced them with unused sections from hive number two. The brood comb having been cautiously inserted in the new hive, the next step was to cut the branch from which the swarm was hanging. He placed this on the alighting board of the empty hive, and presently, with a little urging from behind with the smoker, the bees began to troop into the entrance like well-trained soldiers. Very soon all had disappeared within and the empty branch was tossed aside.

"There!" exclaimed the experienced bee-keeper with an air of satisfaction, "if I am not very much mistaken there will be great rejoicing in this snug mansion for the next few hours, after which the business of honey-gathering will be resumed with ardor."

"But what will happen in the other hive when the rest of the queens hatch out?" asked Hazel dubiously.

"One of two or three things," he told her. "The reigning queen will perhaps break into the closed cells and sting the sleeping princesses to death one after the other; or she will wait till they emerge from their chambers and do battle with them; or she may conclude to leave the hive with as many of the young workers as she can induce to go with her. Sometimes it happens that every bee in the hive is ready and anxious to find new quarters, then begins what is called after-swarming, and it is one of the most trying experiences of the bee-keeper. I once had seven swarms come off one after another

in rapid succession from one hive. Five of them got away altogether and were never heard of afterward; swarms number six and seven were no bigger than my closed fist. I induced them to unite with another colony by a little diplomacy. Many bee-keepers clip one set of wings from their queens, which, of course, cripples the royal mother so that she is not able to lead the swarm away. I could never bring myself to mutilate the beautiful creature so cruelly, so content myself with arranging matters as we have done to-day. Most of the bees will go to the new hive, and those left behind may sensibly conclude that they can afford no more swarming this season; or if the young queen be of a belligerent turn of mind the question will have been solved before to-morrow in the way that I told you. We can only wait and see."

The bees having been comfortably disposed of, Patrick, who had been eyeing the young man thoughtfully during the foregoing operations, approached him with an air of profound

respect. "Could you be taking a look at my orchard for half an hour, sir?" he said, in a low voice. "I'd like a word with you, if you please."

John Lough glanced at the old man's troubled face. "I'll be with you in a few minutes," he said kindly.

Patrick walked slowly away toward the peach orchard. Hazel's dark eyes followed him. "He wants to brag about his strawberry plants and his young trees," she said wisely. "He is as proud of those trees as a peacock; though I can't think why, for they have n't a sign of a peach on them. I heard Patrick talking to Love last night. 'If we can hold on this year,' he said, 'next year 'll see us in smoother water along of the peach trees, please God.' Patrick does mix his metaphors so; but there is n't much use in trying to teach him. What have strawberry vines and peach trees to do with smooth water, for example?"

"What, indeed?" murmured John Lough,

drawing his brows together perplexedly. "If you will see to picking up the bee-veils and smokers and other traps, and give them to Myers when he comes after them, Hazel, I will just stroll down and look at these wonderful peach trees."

"He does n't want me to go with him," said Hazel to herself, with a penetration beyond her years. "It seems to me ever so many people are getting—well, queer. I do hope I am not going to be disappointed in John Lough! Lovina Gordon is certainly getting queerer every day of her life!"

Patrick was wandering among the slender stems of his young orchard with unseeing eyes. "It 's just this way, sir," he began without preamble, as the young man approached. "Eliza Collins is my wedded wife—to have an' to hold, as the book puts it, till death do us part. She 's got a hot temper, Collins has, an' I don't think any less of her for it. She 's made that way, an' she can't help it. But when the madam

tells her to take a month's warning an' go, why, where do I come in? An' what 'll become of Miss Love an' the child? I can't leave 'em, nohow; an' what they 'd do without Eliza Collins is more 'an I know. I hope you 'll excuse me, sir, for speaking this right out—a family matter as it is. But I 'm not mistaken in thinkin' you 're a true friend of thim as has n't many friends, am I, sir?"

"I want to be their best friend—if they will have me," said John Lough, seriously.

"Bless you for that, sir; there 's no doubt that they need a friend like yourself, sir. And more friendly young ladies than Miss Love an' Miss Hazel 'ud be hard to find. But Madam Sedgewick—now." He stopped to wipe his forehead with some confusion. "It 's come hard on my lady," he went on apologetically; "Mr. Sedgewick went sudden, an' he was one of the best men God ever planned. Did you know him, sir?"

"I had only a slight acquaintance with Mr.

Sedgewick," replied the young man. "But I can well imagine he was all that you have said. It is little wonder that his widow is almost unbalanced by his loss and the sudden change in her surroundings."

"That 's just it, sir," said Patrick gratefully; "you could n't expect to plant an orange tree from Florida among my peaches here an' see it flourish, could you, sir? Oranges ain't planned by the Almighty for hard frosts; no more are some folks. They just wilt right down an' pindle away, an' 't ain't their fault 'at they can't stan' up through the snows an' freezin' winds like these fine young trees of mine. There 's Miss Love now, she 's made for all kin's of weather—bless her sweet heart! Why, sir, I could n't tell you the half of my young lady's goodness an' kindness if I begun now an' talked all night! An' I 've knowed her since she was no higher 'an my knee."

Something in the face of his listener must have encouraged the old man to proceed, for he

certainly did go on to discourse at length upon his favorite theme. "Somehow I can't talk this way to Eliza Collins," he added, rather shamefacedly. "Collins is terrible fond of Miss Love, too; but she says she don't believe in bowin' down to no idols. She told me yesterday I was n't much better 'an a cannibal heathen when it come to Miss Love."

John Lough laughed outright. "I hope it won't go as far as that," he said; "there are some others who would like to have a share in the æsthetic worship."

"Collins is a very religious woman," observed Patrick seriously. "She goes regular to 'Piscopal service twice of a Sunday, does Eliza Collins, an' what she don't know about all kinds of heathen ain't worth mentionin'. But what would you be advisin' about this 'ere predicament I 'm in? My wife is for packin' up an' leavin' this very day. She says I 'll have to go, too. But of course I can't leave the family. I promised the master I 'd stan' by, an' I 'm goin'

to do it. It 's likely enough the madam 'ull send me, too. She never cared for my ways about the place, an' I 've knowed it better 'an anybody else this long time; but Miss Love can't be takin' in anybody into her house. It would n't do, sir."

"It certainly would not," agreed the young man with decision. "I have n't much acquaintance with Mrs. Sedgewick," he went on, after a short period of reflection, "and I imagine my advice would not be very cordially received in that quarter at present. But I 'll venture to say that Miss Gordon will have gone far to pacify your excellent wife before you see her again. Suppose the matter be allowed to rest *in statu quo*. In a month's time many things may happen. Who knows, Patrick, everything may be handsomely straightened out by that time."

"You don't know Eliza Collins, sir," said Patrick lugubriously. "Nor yet the madam. But I 'll do as you say, sir. That is, I 'll do nothing at all for the present; that 's my notion of your meaning, sir."

"That 's it exactly. Do nothing at all," said John Lough. He walked away with a curious smile in his dark eyes. "A month's warning," he repeated softly. "Much may happen in a month's time. Much shall happen in a month!"

CHAPTER XIV

FETTERS

A CIRCUMSTANCE which our masterful poet did not plan for in his month of probation occurred that very night. Mrs. Sedgewick was reposing among her pillows in the daintiest of lace-trimmed robes after a very serious nervous attack, through which Love had attended her with anxious devotion.

"I don't know what I should do without you, Love," the poor lady had whispered pathetically. "You are positively my only comfort!"

"Dear Aunt Margaret, how happy it makes me to hear you say that!" said the girl, stooping to caress the delicate fingers which still sparkled sumptuously with gems.

Mrs. Sedgewick looked at her fixedly. "Does

it, Love?" she said after a pause. "Sometimes I have thought that you would be glad if I were laid beside your uncle. I am sure I must be a great care at times."

"A precious care, darling aunty!" cried the girl with emotion. "You know I wish for nothing in the world so much as to make you happy." A scarlet flush crept into her cheeks as she spoke, and her honest eyes drooped a little with the remembrance of the foolish, unreasoning joy of the afternoon.

"But you might wish to leave me some day," persisted the invalid fretfully. "I wish you would promise me that you will not. Promise me, Love!"

The girl hesitated for the space of a heart-beat or two—slow and heavy heart-beats.

Two big tears stole out from the invalid's dark eyes and hung trembling on her long lashes. "I do promise you, Aunt Margaret," said Love firmly. "I will never leave you. How could you think that I would?"

"I thought you could hardly be so ungrateful," syllabled Mrs. Sedgewick faintly. "But I have had an uneasy feeling of late that somebody or something was trying—" She paused and drew her delicate brows together. "There could be no one—unless— Have you seen much of that John Lough lately, Love! Does he come here often?"

"Only occasionally to help Hazel with her bees," replied the girl, with a deepening of the guilty flush in her soft cheeks. "I have only seen him once since you spoke to me, Aunt Margaret," she added hastily.

"He might do very well for Hazel after a while," observed Mrs. Sedgewick thoughtfully. "I should like to see Hazel well married, and I am sure I don't know how she is to see anything of society in this dreadful place."

"Hazel is so young," murmured Miss Gordon.

"Of course she is—a mere child," said Mrs. Sedgewick somewhat sharply; "but a few years will make her into a woman. You must re-

member that, Love. I do hope you are being very careful about her lessons. The poor child is absolutely cut off from every pleasure and advantage."

"I am doing my best, Aunt Margaret," said the girl, in a voice which would tremble a little.

"I suppose you are," acquiesced Mrs. Sedgewick with a deep sigh. "It must have been a special Providence that made your poor uncle take so much pains with your education. I remember I used to think that he was foolishly particular. But one never can tell."

After a long silence she again called the girl to her side. "You know, Love, you have promised to stay with me always," she said, fixing her eyes anxiously on the serious young face.

"Yes, Aunt Margaret, I promised."

"Pray, don't look as if you were taking the veil, child; you know I shall always be your best friend. See, I am going to give you this ring to wear. I have meant to make you a

present for some time; you certainly deserve one."

"No—no—not that, Aunt Margaret! I don't want any present. I—"

"But I insist, my dear child," said Mrs. Sedgewick authoritatively. "I shall give you this ring to wear always, and only we two shall know its meaning. Remember, you are not to tell any one of this little talk of ours. Kiss me, dear!" She drew the girl's shrinking hand toward her and placed upon it a flashing diamond. "There," she said complacently; "that is one of my very handsomest rings. Your uncle gave it to me on my last birthday."

Love looked at it through hot tears. Then, to Mrs. Sedgewick's utter amazement and displeasure, she burst into a passion of weeping, and hurriedly left the room.

That lady passed some uncomfortable minutes during the interval which elapsed before the girl crept back to her bedside with a faltering little apology. But, on the whole, she congrat-

ulated herself upon her far-seeing wisdom and acumen. "Even if the girl has foolishly allowed her fancy to stray after that singular young man, I have done her a real kindness in putting a stop to it," she told herself. "He would never be attracted by a portionless girl like Love, who has neither beauty nor talent."

Just how indispensable to her own comfort that pair of willing hands, those seemingly tireless feet, that gentle voice might become, the invalid was daily discovering; and the list of self-imposed tasks grew longer day by day, as the girl gave herself more and more wholly to her service of love. Mrs. Sedgewick's voice was very soft and sweet, her manner perfection; but her young nurse soon came to understand and to dread the glance of veiled displeasure, the offended silences, which were her aunt's sole punishment for duties forgotten or clumsily performed.

The days had begun to slip by in that swift, silent fashion which is not, after all, the sole

recompense of a monotonous existence. A certain peace and satisfaction, born of fidelity to duty, possessed the girl so utterly that she was scarcely startled when, one day, John Lough boldly demanded her presence in the drawing-room in stereotyped fashion.

Mrs. Sedgewick was comfortably ensconced in an easy chair, listening drowsily to the last popular novel, which Love was reading aloud when the young man's card was brought up.

"It 's a regular pasteboard call, Lovina Gordon!" said Hazel, peeping over her shoulder. "You ought to stop long enough to put on your prettiest gown. Do put it on—your white cashmere, I mean, so he can see how sweet you look in it! I 'll run down and talk to him about the bees till you come."

"Be quiet, Hazel," said Mrs. Sedgewick disapprovingly. "You talk altogether too much for so young a girl. I think I shall go down myself. I am feeling particularly well to-day. Love, my dear, you are quite suitably dressed;

you may come down with me just as you are."

The girl glanced at her blue and white gingham with an abstracted smile. She was thinking of a certain afternoon, which already seemed curiously long ago, when she had worn that gown and walked under the blossoming trees at John Lough's side. Everything was changed since then. The keen, cold sparkle of the diamond she wore had come to mean much to her. It seemed to bind her to the dearly-remembered past as well as to the unsmiling future. She fancied her uncle's grave face as looking with satisfaction upon her patient service of love—a service which would perhaps continue till the mist of years rested in frost upon her head. It had seemed easy of late to forget everything but the duties of the hour—to move with tranquillity in the narrow circle of the invalid's chamber. But her young heart gave a great and unexpected throb as she laid her slim fingers in the young man's outstretched hand.

"We are, of course, living very quietly at present," Mrs. Sedgewick was saying sweetly. "We have met very few of the persons who live in the village below. The clergyman and his wife called last week, I believe; did they not, my dear? I was not able to see them. I really cannot interest myself in outside matters. But clergymen are so insistent. Of course, it is their business to be so, and one cannot criticise them for a certain amount of zeal. This person actually urged that Hazel should come to Sunday-school; and he wanted my niece to sing in the village choir. That was it, was it not, Love?"

Mrs. Sedgewick did not wait for a reply; she was keenly aware of the way in which her visitor's grey eyes turned to the girl's face, and of the faint answering flash which sprang to meet them. "I must thank you again for the very great pleasure you have given my little Hazel," she went on graciously. "She has talked of little else save of you and her bees for

weeks past. And her delight was unbounded when Patrick brought in some boxes of really nice honey yesterday. It is truly poet's food, is it not? When one thinks of the nectar in the thousands of flowers gathered drop by drop into the delicate cells. I always taste it for the delightful associations' sake, though I am not at all fond of sweets."

John Lough had been gravely regarding his hostess as her smooth voice rippled on; but now he turned his eyes with a sort of deliberate determination upon the modest figure at her side. "Do you enjoy watching the bees as well as your cousin does, Miss Gordon?" he asked. "I have fancied that you had lost your interest in them."

Mrs. Sedgewick drew the girl's hand affectionately into her own—the hand on which shone the tell-tale diamond. "My niece is a very busy girl just now, Mr. Lough," she said gently. "She has little time in which to watch those interesting pets of Hazel's." She patted the

unresisting hand which lay in hers, and the brilliant stone upon it shot out scarlet and azure fires toward the questioning eyes which were drawn to this pretty by-play of affection in which precious stones seemed to play so important a part.

It was a hint broad enough to have discouraged most experimental suitors, Mrs. Sedgewick told herself. She was becoming uncomfortably aware that there was something more than she had known between these young people, and the fact roused her to indignation. "The girl has deceived me," she decided—the while she talked smoothly and gracefully on a wide variety of topics.

Love Gordon sat shy and silent. "I have promised," she was thinking, "and I am glad. I know just what I must always do, and that is a comfort. He has asked to be my friend, but there will be no room in my life for friends—and no need." A certain aloofness in her manner, which yet left the impression of a

pathetic wistfulness, impressed him as he rose to take his leave.

He presently found his mind turning with a new regret to his past. "If mother were here," he reflected, "she would understand that woman; I do not. I wonder just what she was driving at, anyhow?" By which it will be seen that the delicate significance of Mrs. Sedgewick's tone and gesture had been utterly wasted upon this obtuse masculine person, who had very dim and unworldly ideas concerning his own state of mind, and to whom the etiquette and formalities of a fashionable engagement were wholly unknown.

"I wish to see her oftener—to see her every day," he was conscious of thinking. And presently, somewhat to his own amazement, he found himself planning with positive cunning to accomplish these new-born but urgent desires. But no nun in closely guarded cloister was ever more difficult of access than the object of his longing thoughts seemed on a sudden to have become.

"Where does Miss Gordon keep herself nowadays?" he demanded bluntly of Hazel—this when the two were watching the bees flocking joyously into their hives laden with the golden pollen of the young chestnut blossoms.

"They look exactly as if they were wearing little yellow knickerbockers!" remarked Hazel irrelevantly. "Do see those absurd little scamps just going in. They must be young bees; don't you think so?"

"I have n't seen her for two weeks," he went on discontentedly. "Does she never go out to walk, or—"

"Do you mean the queen bee?" asked Hazel innocently. "I thought you said the queen bees hardly ever went out. They have to stay in and govern, don't they?"

"I was speaking of your cousin, Miss Gordon," said the young man, trying to look indifferent, with indifferent results.

"Oh, you mean Love. I was so interested in watching the bees, I did n't— Oh, do see those

two having a fight! Don't you suppose one of them has made a mistake and gotten into the wrong hive? The hives do look so exactly alike, you know. I don't see how they can tell which is their own. Or perhaps that one wants to get some honey that does n't belong to him. Did n't you tell me that they go into each other's hives sometimes and steal honey?"

"Not when the honey-flow is abundant—as it is now," said John Lough patiently. "How would you like to take a drive with me, Hazel? Ask your mother if you may, and I will take you to see the lighthouse."

"How perfectly splendid!" cried the little girl. "I 'll go ask mother this minute."

"Stop a bit," he said hesitatingly. "Won't you ask Miss Gordon if she will go, too? It is such a beautiful day I think she would enjoy it."

Hazel returned in an astonishingly short time, freshly frocked and wearing a very becoming hat, of which she was prettily con-

scious. "I did n't keep you waiting long, did I?" she asked brightly. "It was so lovely of you to ask me. Mother said she thought it was very kind; she thought the change would do me good. I am studying so hard now—you 've no idea! And it is really vacation. Don't you think it is too bad to make me work in the summer? Love says I got so behind in my work this spring that I can only have the month of August this year."

"Will—ah—Miss Gordon go with us?" he asked.

"Love? No; Love is busy sewing the lace on a muslin wrapper for mother. It is the sweetest thing—pale blue and all ruffles, and every one of the ruffles edged with lace. Love sews so nicely. I hate sewing. Mother always looks pretty when she is sick. She says she simply will not degenerate into a frowsy invalid."

The young man looked dangerous. "Does Miss Gordon play the dressmaker, then, as well as trained nurse and—" He stopped short and

bit his lip. "Here comes Myers with the trap," he concluded, with a frown.

"You look as cross as if you were obliged to go all by yourself," said Hazel, seating herself in the vehicle with a grand display of fluffy ruffles. "There is n't a thing that Lovina Gordon can't do," she added triumphantly as the horses started off at a brisk pace. "She 's every bit as strict with my lessons as Miss Denton or Mademoiselle, or any of the teachers at Miss Porter's. I just have to learn more, because you see I must recite every bit of the lesson every single day. Sometimes, at school, if you look *very intelligent* when there 's a part you know, and just fix your mind on the teacher, she will call on you for that very part; and then, of course, you 'll recite it perfectly and get a splendid mark. When, if she had called on you for the part just after or just before, perhaps you 'd get only seventy, or maybe a zero. I used to do that way with Miss Patrick, our history teacher, and it worked every time. I did n't invent it, though; an

awfully clever girl in our school named Gail Prentice invented it. It's a splendid invention, too, if one has the right kind of a teacher!"

"But Miss Gordon is n't the right kind of a teacher, eh?"

"Not for that, I can tell you! She seems to know by magic just what I don't know, and there 's not a bit of use in trying to look intelligent with her. Mother says she is so glad Love has such a good, solid education; because now she can't afford to send me to Miss Porter's or any nice school in town. And, of course, she would n't think of having me go to any of the schools over here."

"Why not?" said John Lough rather crossly. "I went to the schools here when I was a boy, and they are much better now than they were then."

"Of course, it 's altogether different with a boy," said Miss Hazel superbly. "It does n't make so much difference where they go to school. That 's what mother thinks. She says

if I was a boy she should send me to the high school. And I wish I was one for forty other reasons!"

"When do you recite your lessons?" he asked.

"Arithmetic from ten to eleven—that is, if Love is through dressing mother at that time; but as near ten as possible. Then French for half an hour. Sometimes we converse while Love makes the dessert. She does that every day now to pacify Collins. Then, after lunch, I have English and history. At dinner we always speak in French, except when mother is down. She says it makes her nervous to hear my idioms. Love is always having to correct me. It does seem as though the person who invented the French language must have been crazy; the idioms are so absurd!"

"When does Miss Gordon go out to walk?" he asked after a silence, during which Hazel was manifestly enjoying the swift motion through the invigorating salt air.

"She does n't go to walk; but she nearly always goes to market," replied the little girl. Her eyes were fixed on the graceful motions of a pair of gulls which were sailing overhead. "Are n't they the prettiest things when the sun shines on their feathers?"

"Yes. But what time does Miss Gordon go to market?" he persisted. "I have a particular reason for asking."

Hazel turned her bright eyes curiously upon his anxious face. "Why, how funny!" she exclaimed. "Why in the world should you want to know what time Lovina Gordon goes to market? Do you want her to pick out your chickens and things? Mother says she does that even better than Patrick, and Patrick has such lots of other things to do. Love likes to go; she says the morning is the very best time to be out of doors. She nearly always goes before breakfast, and is back in time to arrange mother's tray and make her chocolate."

"H'm!" said John Lough in a tone of mingled displeasure and satisfaction.

"I had the loveliest time!" exclaimed the little girl, casting herself into her cousin's arms upon her return. "I do think John Lough is a '*chevalier sans peur et sans reproach*,' and you can't call *that* gushing, Lovina Gordon! It's a classical quotation; so there! But sometimes he does ask the queerest questions. What do you think he wanted to know, and insisted upon knowing? I had to laugh!"

"I 'm sure I can't guess, dear," said Miss Gordon soberly.

"Why, he wanted to know what time you went to market in the morning. I asked him if he was going to ask you to pick out his chickens and things. He did n't say."

"Why, Hazel, dear, what an answer! But how could he know that I go to market?"

"I suppose I told him; I 've forgotten. We were talking about my studies, and I told him exactly how strict you are, you dear, and how

hard I have to work. I think he was sorry for me. He likes me very much, John Lough does; and perhaps he intends to tell you that you are making me work too hard. I know he thought so from the way he looked when I was telling him about it."

CHAPTER XV

A RAINY DAY

LOVE Gordon awoke the next morning to the tune of swift-pattering drops and the ecstatic rain-song of robins swaying in the dripping tree-tops. The grave, silver voice of the little clock on her mantle told the hour. The girl counted the vibrating strokes, then sprang from her pillow with a dismayed face.

"I 'm sure I don't know how I came to sleep so late this morning," she was saying to Collins in the kitchen half an hour later. "It must have been the rain, I think," she added brightly. "I have gotten to depend lately on a certain sunbeam, which opens my eyes punctually at six o'clock every morning."

Collins glanced at the slight figure of her young mistress with a strenuous mingling of emotions on her round, red face. "What you 're a-goin' to do passes me," she said, with strong emphasis on the last word. "You 're that cruel overdone now that it 's a sin an' a shame. If it wa'n't that I 'd passed my solemn word to Patrick Miles I declare to it I 'd stay with you in spite of everything. Miles 'as gone to market this mornin'," she added irrelevantly. "I told him as 'ow you could n't be goin' out in the pourin' rain."

Miss Gordon's cheeks suddenly reflected the glow of the fire as she deftly arranged a bit of crisp toast on a pretty china plate. "I am very much obliged to Patrick," she said hastily. "I—I hope he will go to-morrow morning, too."

"I 'll tell him," said Mrs. Miles, as she moved majestically across the kitchen with the full tray.

Mrs. Sedgewick lifted heavy eyes to the dripping window-panes as her niece quietly set

out the breakfast service. "Rain!" she syllabled faintly. "I 've scarcely slept the whole night through for the monotonous pouring, and just as I was beginning to feel deliciously drowsy those noisy birds began to chatter in the shrubbery."

"Don't you think you would sleep better at night if you gave up your long afternoon nap, Aunt Margaret?" asked Love, and instantly repented the words as a displeased look clouded the face of the invalid.

"What an absurd idea, child," said Mrs. Sedgewick sharply. "My morning and afternoon naps are my only salvation; I must rest when I can. I think I am growing more and more wakeful at night of late. You have no idea in your rude young strength how much I suffer alone in my room here."

"No, dearest aunty, I know I cannot imagine," murmured Love contritely. "The night always seems so short to me."

"Of course, it does," agreed Mrs. Sedgewick,

sipping her chocolate languidly. "I wish you would order Collins to put a cot for you in my dressing-room, child; then if I am unable to sleep I can awaken you easily. I must think of myself a little more, I find, and less of other people."

Love Gordon's pale cheeks flushed, but she made no reply. Indeed, she presently fell to reproaching herself hotly for the rebellious thoughts which had crowded unbidden to her mind. "Dear Aunt Margaret!" she murmured to herself tenderly, as she carried away the scarcely tasted meal; "she has lost so much, and I am so selfish to keep forgetting. I ought to be thankful—yes, *thankful* that I can do a little something to make her comfortable."

Perhaps it was this hard-earned sense of gratitude which caused the sweet young face to shine with so pleasant a light behind the breakfast things a few minutes later.

"You look as pleased as if somebody had told you a fine piece of news, Love," said Hazel

enviously as she unfolded her napkin. "And it 's a horridly disagreeable day, too; Patrick and Collins are both cross, and I just know mother will have an attack of neuralgia. Do you know, Love Gordon, I sometimes think it is positively unpleasant to be living."

Love Gordon smiled. "Oh, no, you don't really think anything of the kind, dear," she said brightly. "This will be a beautiful day to finish those bee hats. I 've found a big pair of old shears that will cut the netting perfectly, and I 've some black point d'esprit to sew around the lower edge of the bonnet. You can tuck that in your jacket," she explained, "and not a bee can find its way inside."

"Did you think of that all yourself, Love?" said Hazel admiringly. "I 've been wondering how to keep them from creeping up—they 're so clever and sly, the darlings!"

"We 'll have that little arithmetic test first, you know," went on Miss Gordon diplomatically; "then after luncheon I 'll read to Aunt

Margaret till she falls asleep, and *then* we 'll set our mighty intellects to work on the bee-bonnets —we can do our French as we sew."

Hazel made a wry face. "I loathe arithmetic tests," she said succinctly. "And you 're far slyer than the bees, Love, when it comes to inventing hard questions for poor little me to answer. I think you 're positively heartless. What difference will it make whether I know fractions perfectly or not? Answer me that, Lovina Gordon."

"It will make far more difference than you think, Hazel," said her cousin gravely. "You will soon grow to be a woman, dear. And, oh, little girl, I do want you to be an unselfish, good woman—for—for your sake, and for—"

"Of course I 'm going to be good *enough*," interrupted Hazel with a petulant shrug. "But too many compound fractions might make me positively vicious; so look out, Miss Governess."

The arithmetic "test" being happily a thing of the past, and Mrs. Sedgewick wrapped in

peaceful slumber, the two girls settled themselves cosily to work on the bee-bonnets. "I don't mind now if it is raining," said Hazel pleasantly. "It will be good for the white clover, too, and white clover makes the sweetest, nicest honey of all."

"Does it?" asked Miss Gordon, somewhat absent-mindedly. Her brown eyes had strayed to the red roofs which peeped out from the dripping trees on the neighboring lawn.

The corners of Hazel's lips dimpled. "You are thinking of John Lough," she said confidently. "I was, too, at that very minute. Was n't it queer?"

"Was n't what queer?" demanded Miss Gordon, a telltale flush creeping into her cheeks.

"Why, about his wanting to know what time you went to market. If *he* thinks you are making me work too hard, will you let me stop lessons for the rest of this month?"

"I don't expect to consult Mr. Lough about your lessons, Hazel," said Miss Gordon, with a

spice of severity in her tones. "Why should I?"

"Well, since you 've asked me, I 'll tell you," said Hazel candidly. "He put all sorts of questions about when I recited and what I studied; and I can tell you he did n't look pleased when I told him."

"I can't see why he should ask you such questions," murmured Love, wrinkling her forehead perplexedly over a breadth of point d'esprit.

"I can," said Hazel. "It 's perfectly plain. He sympathizes with me; that 's why. He 's very sympathizing, John Lough is. That 's one reason I like him so much. Then he 's clever; you don't have to keep explaining things all the while. He just seems to see right through everything in a flash. I admire that; don't you, Love?"

"You should say sympathetic, not sympathizing, Hazel," corrected Miss Gordon in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Perhaps I ought," said Hazel hotly. "But

you knew perfectly what I meant. It 's astonishing to me that you and John Lough don't like each other better. I would n't be at all surprised if he would like you almost as well as he does me if you would act a little pleasanter and more friendly, and especially if you would n't be so absurdly strict with my lessons. He does n't like that one bit; I could see it perfectly yesterday. I 'm not dull when it comes to understanding people, Lovina Gordon, even if I don't know compound fractions very well."

Miss Gordon laughed outright.

"Oh, you can laugh," said the little girl with an offended toss of her head; "but it 's so." She stole a sidelong glance at her cousin, and was astonished to see her sweet lips quivering. "There!" she cried. "I 've gone and hurt your feelings. I did n't mean to, though. You only make me work hard because you love me; don't you, darling?"

"Just because I love you, Hazel." The wet brown eyes were hidden for a minute or two in

Hazel's thick curls. "You see, dear," the soft voice went on somewhat unsteadily, "we two are very much alone in the world, now that mother is so weak and ill, and we must be careful to do our very best every single day. You must understand, Hazel, that even the longest life is made up of days and hours and minutes, and if we do just as well as we possibly can in every little duty and every bit of work that comes to us—even if we don't altogether like it—by-and-bye we shall be quite grown up and ready, perhaps, for some splendid happening which may be coming toward us all the while."

"I like that thought, Lovina Gordon," said Hazel after a short period of reflection. "It—why, it 's almost like a fairy-story, you know. You do that, I 'm sure, and that 's the reason you never get cross and grumpy the way Collins does. Do you suppose if I learn compound fractions *perfectly*, so that you can't puzzle me with your cleverest, slyest questions, that I shall

have something splendid happen to me after a while?"

"It will certainly help you to grow strong and womanly, dear," said Miss Gordon gently. "But it 's the growing strong we must think most of, and not the splendid reward."

"That 's where I differ with you," said Hazel decidedly. "I shall ask John Lough what he thinks about it."

That night, as Love Gordon lay staring at the hooded lamp from the narrow cot that had been placed in her aunt's dressing-room, she remembered the conversation of the afternoon. "I must think often about the growing strong," she sighed to herself; "for the being strong is all my splendid reward." Then she fell asleep, and dreamed the brief, troubled dreams of one who still wears the day's fetters into the night's peace.

CHAPTER XVI

A DIAMOND AND A TEAR

LOVE GORDON stood in the latticed area at the kitchen door. A thousand shrieking whistles, softened by distance into something like harmonious sound, had just proclaimed the hour of seven. The breath of honeysuckles and roses was on the cool morning breeze; a chorus of thrushes, catbirds and song-sparrows were pouring forth a full tide of song in the tops of the tall trees. The young lady's eyes were very bright and her cheeks very pink beneath the brim of her straw hat; she was fingering the handle of her small splint basket nervously. "Could you go to market this morning, Patrick?" she asked, as the old man paused outside to remove certain clods of garden mould

from his boots before stepping onto the freshly scoured bricks.

"It 'ud put me out a good bit, miss," he replied doubtfully. "I was wishin' to pick the rest of thim berries for the market-man before the sun gets too hot an' drys thim up. It makes a big difference in the boxes, though you 'd not think it. It 's a mornin' to be out in, Miss Love. Why was n't you wantin' to go? It 's little enough of air an' sunshine you 're gettin' these days—an' more 's the pity."

Love Gordon drew a deep breath; the pink in her soft cheeks deepened. Then she lifted her head with a defiant little toss. "I 'll go," Patrick," she said with decision. "I only thought I might pick the berries, you know," she added hurriedly, her eyes drooping again.

"Indeed, an' you 'll not, miss," cried Patrick, "what with the briars an' the mosquitoes your pretty hands 'ud be a sight. I had a talk with Eliza Collins last night," he added in a low voice. "She 's as firm as a mountain—that

woman. I 've 'bout giv' up on it. She says as how she leaves this house bag an' baggage one week from to-day. Ain't there anything you could say to her, miss?"

Miss Gordon shook her head dejectedly. "I really do not blame Collins in the least," she said sadly. "But, oh, Patrick, what shall we do without you?"

"Did you s'pose I was goin', too?" demanded the old man gruffly. "I 've took my stan' an' I ain't a-goin' to be moved by no woman on God's footstool. No, I ain't—not even if she is my lawful wedded wife! Eliza Collins knows me."

"Oh, Patrick, I could n't think of having you stay after Collins is gone. I should feel too wicked to have broken up your home. We shall have to do the best we can without you; but it nearly breaks my heart to think of it." And indeed the tears were standing in the young lady's brown eyes. "I have spoken to the vegetable man, she added after a pause, "and he

thinks his daughter will come to help in the kitchen; Bertha is only eighteen and she has n't worked out much, he says, but she is strong and willing. And that young Swan boy wants to do the weeding and mow the lawn; I told him to come and see me next week."

Patrick gave vent to a great snort of grief and rage. "Let me catch the young rapscallion about this place, an' I 'll break his good-fer-nothin' neck fer him," he cried wrathfully. "Why, Miss Love, they 're the terror of the neighborhood—thim Swan boys! Weed the garden, indeed! He 'd carry off more fruit an' garden stuff every day than he 'd earn if he worked a year! I tell you I ain't a-goin', an' that ends it! Did n't I promise the master afore I ever thought of such a fool notion as hitchen' my wagon to Eliza Collinses. I beg your pardon, Miss Love, fer talkin' so obstreperous like; but you can't undo my resolutions as was made in better days, an' there ain't any use in your tryin' it. You leave this 'ere matter

to me, an' don't you go to worryin' your pretty head about it no more."

For some reason, which the girl did not explain to herself, she chose a roundabout way to the unpretentious market. The butcher was all smiles as he caught sight of Miss Gordon's slim figure. He had been booking certain astonishing orders delivered in an absent-minded manner by a tall young gentleman in tweeds.

This young man had retired precipitately through the back entrance of the shop at sight of the blue gown in the doorway—in the very midst of a dissertation on the comparative merits of spring lamb and spring chickens delivered by the obliging butcher.

"Yes, certainly," the new customer had responded hastily. "You may send up half a dozen of them, if you please."

"You don't mean lambs, sir?" inquired the astonished butcher.

"Yes, lambs, of course; did n't you say those were best? Send them up at once, and—" It

was at this juncture that the harmlessly demented gentleman (as the marketman shrewdly suspected him to be) abruptly quitted the shop.

"Curious circumstance—very," remarked the genial purveyor of flesh foods, as he popped a pair of neatly wrapped sweet-breads into the little splint basket. "Gentleman walked in here some fifteen minutes ago, wandered about, staring through his glasses at my stock, and finally ordered six spring lambs sent to his house; yes 'm, six! You could have knocked me down with a feather. Did you see him, miss? Tall chap, with glasses. I 'll bet he 's as crazy as a loon. Sad, ain't it?"

The young lady's cheeks took on an extra tinge of color, as she ventured the remark that possibly the new customer was unaccustomed to marketing. She walked very fast after leaving the shop, and without once turning her head. But it was of no use; he overtook her at the first corner. "Do you always walk as fast as

this, Miss Gordon? Upon my word, I had all I could do to come up with you. I was determined to see you this morning," he added coolly, after a short pause. "Friends ought to see one another often, you know; and I have scarcely laid eyes on you, Love, since that blessed day you went to the grocery. I never knew before how interesting grocery and butcher shops were."

He was looking at her eagerly as he talked. "You don't mind my coming, do you, Love? I asked Hazel yesterday. I just had to! I was hungry for a sight of my—" He stopped short at the little gesture of denial and repulsion which the girl involuntarily made. "This is no place to speak," he went on hastily; "but I never seem to be able to see you—to speak to you. Let us turn into this quiet lane; it is really a nearer way home." This, as she shook her head with a frightened air that went to his heart.

"Love—Love! You are not afraid of me,

are you, dear? Because I love you, I want you to be my wife!"

A great light flashed into the innocent eyes uplifted to meet his. Then the radiance faded. "I—I cannot. I must not even listen," she said brokenly. "You do not understand—But, my promise—I cannot."

The white, sparkling stone on the trembling little hand that held the splint basket suddenly flashed a terrible meaning into the man's soul. He stopped short, his face white and stern. "Do you mean—are you telling me that you are promised to another? Tell me quick for God's sake!"

The girl nodded. Then a heart-broken little sob mingled with the jubilant love-song of the thrush swinging on the very topmost bough of the big elm tree under which she was walking. He had left her—"forever," she told herself, with the poignant despair of youth, and was hurrying away with great strides.

It was a very quiet little figure, with a sad,

far-away look in the sweet brown eyes, that stole into the invalid's chamber an hour later. She was carrying a tray, crowded with a dainty breakfast service, which she presently set forth on a small table drawn close to the bedside. "Here are some letters, Aunt Margaret. Will you see them first, or shall I pour the chocolate?"

Mrs. Sedgewick extended a languid hand. "There can be nothing of interest," she said dejectedly. "My life is ended. I can only drag out the remnant of my days in this gloomy spot."

The girl reached for her damp handkerchief, and wiped away two or three rebellious drops which hung on her long lashes. Mrs. Sedgewick lifted her eyes from the slow process of opening one of the letters. "Why, what is coming over you, Love?" she asked somewhat sharply. "This is the second time I have seen you in tears of late. Really, my dear, I cannot endure to have gloomy people about me, and

you know that perfectly well. My own sorrows are heavy enough without having the fancied grievances of others obtruded upon me. You must really make it a point to be more cheerful. It is most trying to my nerves to see you depressed and gloomy. I think it is positively ungrateful, my dear."

She dropped her eyes to the sheet which she had been languidly unfolding. Her eyes widened as she read; a quick color leaped up in her faded cheeks.

Then she sat up straight among her pillows. "Bring me my dressing-gown and slippers, quick, Love!—The most astonishing piece of news! Really, I am all in a flutter!"

"What is it, Aunt Margaret?" asked the girl anxiously.

"I must go to Boston immediately. Dear, dear, how kind and thoughtful of poor Aunt Sedgewick. I wonder what her own nieces and nephews will have to say."

"Is she ill—Aunt Sedgewick, I mean?"

asked Love, more and more astonished at the extraordinary energy displayed by the invalid, who was actually dressing herself with speed.

"She is dead, poor woman. Apoplexy, the letter says, and I am left residuary legatee! Just think of it, my dear! A very handsome property, the lawyer says. I know him quite well—a Mr. Gibbs, a most reliable person. Oh, how thankful I am to poor, dear Aunt Sedgewick! I was always kind and polite to her, though your uncle used to declare that she was a selfish, heartless woman. And disagreeable she certainly could be. She led those two nieces of her's a life of it, I am told. And now they are cut off with small legacies. Designing persons, both of them. Aunt Sedgewick spoke to me of them more than once. But I never dreamed—do call Hazel, child! I want to tell her at once."

But Hazel was nowhere to be found. She crept into the dining-room just as Collins was clearing the table, her eyes red and swollen as if

from a violent fit of weeping. "Where is Lovina Gordon?" she demanded.

"I don't know, miss," said Collins. "But what ever is the matter with you, child? Have the bees been stinging you?"

But Hazel was dashing up the stairs two steps at a time. "Love, I want you! Love—Love Gordon."

"Come here, Hazel," called her mother's voice. "I want to tell you something."

"Is Love here?" demanded the little girl.

"Love has gone to telephone for a carriage, my dear. Oh, what a sadly wild girl you do look—and tears! Love was crying, too, this morning. But we shall make everything right once more. We have had a fortune left us, dear! and we shall be able to have our old home again and the carriages and all. Is n't that a beautiful surprise?"

Hazel shook the hair out of her red eyes. "Do you mean we shall have to leave this house?" she asked.

"Yes, indeed; I don't intend to remain here another day! Are n't you delighted, girlie?"

"I should have been as mad as a hornet yesterday," said Hazel dejectedly; "but now I don't care. John Lough is going to Europe—to stay I don't know how long!"

"I wonder if Love knew that?" was Mrs. Sedgewick's unuttered question. It was answered presently when the girl herself entered the room, and Hazel blurted out her news. Miss Gordon's face whitened perceptibly, and she sank into the nearest chair without replying.

"Did you hear what I said, Lovina Gordon?" demanded the little girl. "You take it as coolly as if you did n't care a bit. If you don't care, you ought to; so there!"

"Why, pray, should Love interest herself in Mr. Lough's movements?" said Mrs. Sedgewick severely. "Hazel, my dear child, I really think I must put you into Miss Porter's care without delay. Your manners are something terrifying. You *must* learn to be more quiet and decorous,

my dear. Nothing is so excessively *bourgeois* as unbridled emotion of any kind."

"I can't think what has happened to John Lough," Hazel was saying disconsolately. "He was just as pleasant and nice as he could be yesterday. And this morning I ran over to tell him that I was afraid my second hive was going to swarm, and there he sat in the library—like a stone! Just like a stone! And Myers was packing up. Then he told me he was going away. I asked him if it was to Europe, and he said he did n't care. Europe would do."

"Do be quiet a minute, Hazel," said Mrs. Sedgewick abstractedly. "I want to talk to Love now. There are so many things to do and to think of, I hardly know how to begin. But one thing, child—the strangest coincidence, really. Among the other letters was a note from my good old Jane. Her husband died suddenly two months ago, and she wishes to return to me. I was almost as much pleased to hear that news as the other. Of course, I don't

mean I was glad to hear of poor Aunt Sedgewick's sudden death; her unexpected thoughtfulness for me was really *so* surprising. But I cannot help thinking that it is especially providential that Jane should be at liberty just now to come back to me. She is such a treasure, and understands my ways so thoroughly. I want you to send Patrick with some telegrams, Love. I shall telegraph Jane to come to me *at once.* She can accompany me to Boston. And I think I shall take Patrick. One needs a man as well as a maid. Collins will stay with you here; or, better still, you can both go to dear Mrs. de Forest for a week or two. She has urged it repeatedly."

Love Gordon was staring blankly at the pretty flushed face of the speaker. "But, Aunt Margaret," she faltered, "don't you want *me?* I *promised,* you know—I *promised* to stay with you always! *Don't you remember?*" The soft young voice rose almost to a wail with the last words.

"Why, my dear Love, what an odd fancy! Did you suppose I meant never to allow you a holiday, child? You really have been the greatest comfort to me. I don't know how I should ever have gotten along without you. When Jane comes back you shall see how I will reward your patience. I mean to send you back to Bryn Mawr, for one thing. You need n't tell me you did n't mind giving it up, my dear. I knew quite well that you did—even if Mr. Scudder had n't told me so. But I mean to make it up to you, child. You shall see. And we shall have a grand coming-out party after you graduate, just as your dear uncle planned it all."

Mrs. Sedgewick spoke rapidly and with a touch of real anxiety in her smooth tones. The white despair in that young face threatened to become trying to the nerves. It was really a relief when the girl rose and quietly left the room.

"What is the matter with Love?" asked

Hazel in a subdued voice. "She looked almost as strangely as John Lough did."

"I don't know, I am sure," said Mrs. Sedgewick uneasily.

"Perhaps it 's because she promised to stay with you always, and now you would rather have Jane," observed Hazel. "I think that might make me feel bad."

"How unpleasantly you do put things, child!" said her mother fretfully. "I did n't say I would rather have Jane with me. Of course, Love did the very best she could; but she is young and inexperienced. I should never think of such a thing as comparing her with Jane. Why, Jane is a *servant*, child, and Love is my niece. You must learn to distinguish more carefully, my dear."

Hazel had drawn her black brows together. She was evidently thinking deeply. Presently she too sprang up and stole quietly along the hall, pausing in front of her cousin's door. A faint, sobbing breath reached the small, inquisi-

tive ear which was applied to the keyhole. "It must be something awful," reflected the child forlornly, "Love would never cry over it, if it was n't. She is n't the crying kind."

She wandered aimlessly out to her bee-hives, and stood watching the winged workers darting in and out of their modest mansions.

"If we have to go away from here," she thought, "what shall I do with these bees? They have to be fixed warm for winter; John Lough said so. He promised to show me how. Oh, dear, dear! how miserable I do feel! I know what I 'll do: I 'll just go over and ask John Lough what he means to do with his bees while he 's gone. Perhaps Tompkins will stay and take care of them. I suppose I can't keep mine if I have to go to boarding-school. I don't believe Miss Porter could run fast enough to get away from a cross bee."

She laughed aloud at the idea of the dignified preceptress in full flight before one of the winged Amazons. She was still smiling when she tapped at John Lough's half-open library door.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FAIRY PRINCE

THE master of the house was looking over some scattered sheets of manuscript with a far-away look in his grey eyes when the little girl obtruded her tear-stained face into his room. "I hope I am not disturbing you," she began timidly; "but if I am never to see you any more there are some things about the bees I would like to ask you."

"Come in, child," he said kindly; "I am afraid I was very cross and disagreeable when you were here this morning. To tell you the truth, Hazel, I had just heard a piece of very bad news and I was completely knocked up by it. Do you remember the fairy story I told you the other day about the soap-bubble princess,

and of how her great, beautiful palace vanished at a single touch? That is just what happened to me; I hardly knew how large and beautiful an air-castle I had been building till it tumbled about my unlucky ears."

Hazel regarded him with large, mournful eyes. "I guess that 's what happened to me, too—and to Love," she said with a sigh. "I don't know what is the matter with everybody lately," she continued, wrinkling her forehead discontentedly. "Mother thinks we ought to be perfectly happy just because she 's had a lot of money left to her. But I 'm to go to boarding school, and I just hate that! Only think, the girls at Miss Porter's never go out except walking two and two with a teacher. How do you think you would like that, John Lough?—to walk in a kind of a procession, as if you were an orphan, or a—" She stopped short and eyed her listener anxiously. "I do believe I need to be shut up in a boarding school," she said penitently. "Mother says my manners are terrify-

ing—to think of my mentioning *orphans*, when you 're one! Love would know better. Love is to go back to school, too. You know she was a sophomore at Bryn Mawr when father died, and because we were poor she was willing to stay a sophomore forever just to be with mother. But now she 's going back, and she does n't seem to like it any better than I do."

He was fingering one of the scattered pages on his desk. "I should think not under the circumstances," he replied coldly.

Hazel frowned. "You don't like Love very well, I see," she said disapprovingly. "You would, though, if you knew her as I do. But I won't talk about her any more; I came to ask you about the bees. What are you going to do about your bees— When you go to Europe, I mean?"

"I don't know," he said wearily. "I have n't thought of them. Of course, though, it 's simple enough; I shall leave Tompkins in charge of the place. He will look after everything. You

may have the bees, if you like, child. I doubt if I come back here again for some years—perhaps not then."

He spoke more to himself than to the little girl. It seemed to him on a sudden that he could not bear to look often on the door which had framed her young loveliness that morning in May—that it would be well-nigh intolerable to walk alone under the great trees where he had walked with her. So short a time, yet all nature seemed to have withdrawn her once dearly-loved face behind a veil of sadness, and all because—. He shook his broad shoulders with an impatient frown at his own folly. "I am no love-sick boy," he told himself. "I will go away and work—and forget. Labor is, after all, the sweet, calm mistress in whose service there is peace."

He forced himself to listen to Hazel's short, disjointed sentences. "I really could n't, you see. If I was only a boy I should not be obliged to have my manners formed. It is so unpleasant

to think about being 'formed,' as if one were a jelly or a blanc-mange. If I could stay here with Love and have all the bees, I am quite sure we would be rich soon—rich enough I mean to have a good time, and not so rich that everything would be disagreeable. I wish Aunt Sedgewick had stayed alive and kept her money, then Love could have stopped with mother. That 's what she was crying about, I suppose. I had no idea she was so fond of mother as that; why, *I* did n't cry at the thought of mother's going to Boston without me. But perhaps it 's because I am not formed yet."

"I don't think I understand," he said in a low, hesitating voice. "Miss Gordon would certainly be obliged to leave her aunt soon; that is, when—when her marriage takes place."

Hazel stared at him in undisguised astonishment. Then she burst into a peal of elfin laughter. "*Her marriage!*" she ejaculated. "Whose marriage? You 're not talking about Lovina Gordon, are you?"

"I was certainly speaking of Miss Gordon," he replied, rising to his feet with a frown. "But I 'm very sure she would not like to have us discuss her affairs. I beg you will not mention it."

"Of course, not," said Hazel, somewhat crestfallen. "But it was so awfully funny to think of Love's being married. That 's what I tease her about sometimes. She 's a sort of fairy princess, Lovina Gordon is; but there 's never a sign of a fairy prince in the story." The little girl was edging toward the door with a very red face. The look in the grey eyes somehow frightened her. She swallowed hard and winked very fast as she added primly: "I will say good-bye, now, John Lough; and I—I thank you very much for all your kindness about the bees; and—and I hope you will have a very good time in Europe."

"Stop, Hazel!"

She looked back at him with a toss of her naughty head. "I want to go quick," she said,

"before you get any queerer. I want to remember you just as—"

He caught her by both slim wrists. "You teasing elf, you!" he exclaimed. "You mischief-making will-o'-the-wisp! You have led me on through hopes and fears, and into this slough of despair, where I am stuck fast. Now I have caught you, and I will not let you go till I have found out what I wish. Tell me quick, is Miss Gordon going to be married? Or did I misunderstand her, like the oaf that I am?"

A spark of mischief kindled in Hazel's black eyes. "If I am a teasing elf—a mischief-making will-o'-the-wisp, what are you?" she demanded. "Are you really an *oaf*—or are you the fairy prince?"

"Never mind, naughty child; answer me! I must know before I make any more stupid blunders. Or, stay! I will do now what I ought to have done in the beginning." He loosed his

hold on her wrists. "Come, fairy," he said gravely; "I am going to see your mother."

Mrs. Sedgewick was most gracious during the interview that followed. She assured John Lough that although her niece was very young—indeed, the poor child's education was scarcely complete—that there was really no one to whose hands she would more gladly entrust her future.

"But is there—may I ask you to be quite frank with me?—is there any previous attachment—any promise which would stand in the way of my wishes?" he asked in a low voice.

"I think I can assure you positively that there is nothing of the kind," smiled the lady. She colored becomingly under his steady eyes. "The dear child had a fancy—a fond and foolish fancy, of course—that she must always stay with me; and, indeed, dear Mr. Lough, had you preferred your request only yesterday, I should have been *almost* selfish enough to have sent you away disconsolate. I fear I could not have been altogether willing to give up our use-

ful queen bee, as Hazel sometimes calls her cousin. But, of course, the happy change in our circumstances will make the parting easier. I will send Love to you at once, Mr. Lough. I am sure you will make her a happy woman; and the dear child deserves all the happiness that can come to her."

He had to wait a long time quite alone in the pleasant room before his ears detected the slow, hesitating step outside the door. She stood before him presently, her sweet face all flushed and tremulous.

"You—you wished to see me?" she asked faintly.

He was smiling down at her through a sort of glorified mist, which seemed to enfold the two of them. "Yes, Love," he whispered, "I wished to see you—*always!*"

"Things have turned out very well for every body but me, I should say," observed Hazel, one morning some six weeks later. Patrick and

Collins are as pleased as Punch to think of living in that lovely cottage and looking after both the places. Even my bees act as happy and contented as if they had n't been moved down to John Lough's house to stay. I went to say good-bye to them just now, and they did n't care a bit that we 're all going away." She glanced disconsolately about the room, where several half filled trunks yawned wide for more of the dainty frocks and furbelows that lay here and there heaped on bed and chairs.

"But we 're all coming back, you know, Hazel," said Love Gordon happily. "Think of next summer, dear."

"That 's all very well for *you*," said the little girl discontentedly. "This very night you 're to be dressed in that lovely white gown and stand up before that funny little minister, and in a twinkling you 'll be changed to Mrs. John Lough. Then you two will go away to travel in England and Scotland and Italy and Venice. And you 'll probably never think of *me*, grub-

Wings and Fetters—4.

"'YES,' HE WHISPERED, 'I WISHED TO SEE YOU ALWAYS.'"

See p. 295.

bing away over my stupid history and grammar and that *awful* algebra!"

Miss Gordon's eyes were very bright and sweet as she drew the stormy little figure into her arms. "Hazel, dear," she whispered, "indeed I shall think of my little girl every single day. And so will—John."

The last word fell from her lips after the most lovable little pause. "And remember, dear, how even your beautiful queen bee has to stay for a time in her narrow cell while her wings are growing. The history and grammar and algebra —which is n't really awful at all when one begins to understand it—are a sort of royal jelly, which will make my little girl strong and wise and useful when she comes out of school into the big world outside. Don't you see, dear?"

Hazel snuggled her rough locks against her cousin's soft cheek. "I like that idea, Lovina Gordon!" she said. "You always do have such good ideas! I sha'n't tell it to a single one

of the other girls. It shall just keep it for my own particular comfort. And when my lessons are terribly hard I 'll remember that they 're only delicious royal jelly that 'll make me into a queen bee some day—just like you, Love!"

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